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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good afternoon, committee members and ladies and gentlemen. This is meeting number 10 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, on Thursday, January 31, 2008.

I want to begin by welcoming new and returning colleagues. This is the first committee meeting since the Christmas break. I certainly wish you had a good holiday, and I wish everyone the best in 2008.

You will note that the agenda for today is written as going in camera for committee business. My intent is to go into committee business without being in camera and then passing the part of the steering committee meeting that deals with the Burma study. We will come back to our steering committee and ask for a motion to accept what the steering committee planned last Tuesday. There's no need to go in camera for this.

Are there any objections? All right.

Your subcommittee met on Tuesday, January 29, 2008, to consider the business of the committee, and it agreed to make recommendations. We'll deal with the first one now, which is that "pursuant to the motion agreed to on November 20, 2007, the committee hold a briefing session on Thursday, January 31, 2008 on Burma with officials from Foreign Affairs".

Are we in favour of accepting that portion of the steering committee's report?

Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): I just wondered if we could have an amendment to that, Chair.

The Chair: Well, this is what the steering committee brought forward—

Mr. Paul Dewar: And I'm asking if it can be amended.

The Chair: To do what?

Mr. Paul Dewar: To invite other guests who may be present today—if I have the will of the committee.

The Chair: This motion has already passed the steering committee. This only allows us to continue with the department today. It does not prevent us from bringing witnesses on Burma in the future. I can say that very clearly.

This talks about a briefing session on Thursday, January 31, 2008, on Burma with officials from Foreign Affairs. We still have a motion

on that, and if we want to entertain other witnesses at a later date, that would be all right.

I don't think that particular point has to be dealt with now. This is to allow us to proceed to hear from the department.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm fully aware of that. I was simply wanting to know if you could entertain an amendment. What I'm hearing you say is that you could, but you don't want to.

I want to move things along here, because we have guests, but I simply want it to be stated for the public record that I'd like to invite to the committee other guests from civil society, some of whom are present here today, to tell us from their perspective what is going on in Burma vis-à-vis the government's response and also any concerns they might have.

• (1535)

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Chair, while in principle we don't have any difficulty with the gist of the argument the NDP has put forward, we did discuss this in the steering committee. So if we're talking about the steering committee, once this thing is over with he is welcome to bring forward a further motion to say that he would like that to continue as part of this thing here.

So in order to do that, I suggest we move forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Paul Dewar: That's fine, Chair. I just hope the committee will entertain other witnesses on this issue.

I won't get into amending the motion, which is my right, but I'll leave it for us to work cooperatively to make sure we are going to have other witnesses come forward on this issue.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

So we're all in favour of proceeding today as...?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right, carried.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on November 20, 2007, we will proceed with a briefing on the violent reaction of the Burmese regime to the democratic movements in Burma.

We have appearing before us today the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

First of all, we have Randolph Mank, director general of the Asia south and Pacific bureau; Peter McGovern, director general, bilateral commercial relations, Asia and Americas; Adèle Dion, director general, human security and human rights bureau; and John F. G. Hannaford, the director general and deputy legal adviser.

We welcome you here. Certainly we have anticipated your coming. All parties have been taken with the concerns that we have seen in Burma. Even in the midst of a fairly comprehensive study on Afghanistan, this motion came forward.

We're pleased that you are able to be with us. If you could give us a presentation, we would then move into our first round of questioning. At the close of the next hour or so, we will then move into committee business.

Welcome.

Mr. Randolph Mank (Director General, Asia South and Pacific Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Merci, Mr. Chairman, honourable members, mesdames et monsieurs.

Burma has been ruled by successive military-led governments since the early 1960s. The current Burmese regime consistently violates the human rights of its people. Forced relocation, rape by the military, extrajudicial killings, forced labour, the use of child soldiers, arbitrary arrest and detention, and the persecution of ethnic minorities commonly occur. Reports of torture continue to be received.

The Burmese regime also imposes significant restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms by the people of Burma, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of movement, freedom of association, and freedom of peaceful assembly.

[Translation]

Last fall's round of protests was sparked by a substantial and unexpected rise in fuel prices. However, the small-scale and quickly repressed protests of late August by activists were soon eclipsed by the widespread peaceful protests in September led by Buddhist monks across Burma. The protests subsided following a violent crackdown by the Burmese regime. The crackdown involved violence against monks and protesters, followed by the arrest of thousands of monks and the sealing of key monasteries, depriving the protests of their leaders.

[English]

Canada's policy on Burma was and is a direct reflection of the severe problems that the military government has created for its own people. It also reflects the security concerns that the policies of its leadership and actions of its armed forces pose for the international community.

Prior to the events of September 2007, Canada had already imposed a number of exclusionary bilateral measures on Burma, including the following: export controls on all but humanitarian goods; the withdrawal of preferential import tariffs; a visa ban on visits by high-level members of the government and armed forces; the suspension of bilateral aid and commercial support; exclusion from a market access initiative to eliminate most import duties and quotas; an in-Canada travel notification requirement imposed on

Ottawa-based Burmese diplomats; and official announcements discouraging Canadian tourism to Burma and urging our business community not to invest in or enter into commercial ventures in Burma.

After the latest crackdown, the government decided to impose economic sanctions. On December 13, 2007, the "Special Economic Measures (Burma) Regulations" came into force in order to respond to the gravity of the situation in Burma. In the government's opinion, this situation constitutes a grave breach of international peace and security that has or is likely to result in a serious international crisis. The abhorrent human rights and humanitarian situation in Burma is particularly dangerous as the government's actions not only oppress its own people but also bring substantial transnational destabilizing effects. These destabilizing effects threaten peace and security in the entire region and undermine freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Subject to certain exceptions, the measures implemented by the regulations include: a ban on all goods exported from Canada to Burma, excepting only the export of humanitarian goods; a ban on all goods imported from Burma into Canada; a freeze on assets in Canada of any designated Burmese nationals connected with the Burmese state; a ban on new investment in Burma by Canadian persons and companies; a prohibition on the provision of Canadian financial services to and from Burma; a prohibition on the export of any technical data to Burma; a prohibition on Canadian-registered ships or aircraft from docking or landing in Burma; and a prohibition on Burmese-registered ships or aircraft from docking or landing in Canada and passing through Canada.

We've chosen these sanctions because they will impact on the Burmese regime and clearly indicate Canada's condemnation of its complete disregard for human rights and its repression of the democratic movement. Imposing the toughest sanctions in the world against the Burmese regime is the right thing to do. Our sanctions set an example. Canada is urging others to impose the strongest possible measures against Burma until the Burmese authorities demonstrate their commitment to undertaking genuine reform.

● (1540)

[Translation]

The Government has also pursued a number of non-sanctions measures to demonstrate our support for reform in Burma and for Burma's democratic movement.

In the months following the protests, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made numerous statements on Burma on behalf of Canada. He strongly reiterated Canada's condemnation of the war of deadly force by the military and police against monks and other protesters in Burma who were exercising their right to peaceful dissent. At the G8 Foreign Ministers meeting in New York on September 26, 2007, the Minister joined his counterparts in unanimously condemning the violence in Burma and calling for a resumption of dialogue. He also sent a Canadian diplomat to Rangoon to assess the situation and to show Canada's support for the democratic movement.

On October 17, 2007, following the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister tabled a motion in the House of Commons to confer honorary citizenship on Aung San Suu Kyi. This was done in recognition of her struggle to promote freedom and democracy in Burma, and was adopted by all party agreement.

● (1545)

[English]

Canada has long had economic controls on trade with Burma. Burma was placed on Canada's area control list in 1997, thus controlling the export of all goods to Burma. The stated government policy is that all permit applications are generally denied, except for exports of humanitarian goods.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada has consistently called upon the Canadian business community to not do business with or invest in Burma. Canadian exports to Burma decreased by 62% in 2006 to \$140,000. Canadian imports from Burma were valued at \$8.4 million in 2006, a 24% decrease over 2005 levels. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is working closely with various government departments to ensure proper enforcement of the sanctions.

Canada continues to be very active within UN fora, voicing our serious concerns with the human rights situation in Burma. We are working with the international community to continue to put pressure on the Burmese regime to refrain from violence.

Canada strongly supports the work of the United Nations Secretary General's special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari. The UN Secretary General has twice sent his special envoy to Burma for meetings with senior members of the Burmese regime, as well as with Aung San Suu Kyi. The special envoy travelled to Burma in September and November 2007, and hopes to return to Burma in the coming months.

At the UN Human Rights Council, 18 member states, including Canada, called for a special session on Burma to address the deteriorating human rights situation. The special session held on October 2 resulted in the adoption by consensus of a resolution, co-sponsored by Canada and 50 other countries, strongly deploring the continued repression of peaceful demonstrations in Burma. The council further requested that the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Sérgio Pinheiro, seek an urgent visit to the country and report back to the council. The special rapporteur's visit took place in November 2007, and his report will be presented at the upcoming session of the council from March 3 to 28, 2008.

In conclusion, Canada believes that the Government of Burma must undertake concrete and measurable action to demonstrate its commitment to genuine democratic reform. Despite repeated calls by the international community to exercise restraint and respect human rights, the Burmese regime has been completely unwilling to undertake genuine reform. Canada continues to call upon the Burmese government to respect human rights, engage in a genuine dialogue with members of the democratic opposition, and release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Until it does so, we will continue to work with our partners in the international community to exert pressure against the military junta.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll proceed to the opening round. For the first portion we will have Mr. Wilfert, and these are seven-minute rounds.

We should also welcome Mr. Bagnell, who I know has been involved on the Canada-Burmese committee. So he is sitting in on this. Mr. Bagnell, thanks for coming.

Mr. Wilfert.

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

I'd like to thank our witnesses for coming. I'd especially like to welcome Mr. Mank, who of course has a distinguished career, particularly as our former ambassador in Indonesia.

First of all, I would indicate, through you, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Mank that the policy the government is pursuing is certainly in line with what previous governments have done. My question to you is twofold.

One, what are we doing diplomatically with China and India, which have significant investments—particularly China—in support not only of the business community in Burma, but obviously significant military hardware that they have been selling to the Burmese regime?

Secondly, in terms of organizations such as ASEAN, APEC, etc., what concrete steps have we been taking to work with those partners to try to move this forward?

Finally, I wrote the Chief Justice of Burma—who I know quite well—U Aung Toe, back in October, asking, since he's in charge of the constitutional reform process in Burma.... Basically, although I can't divulge the contents of the response, I can tell you that there seems to be a situation there where there's a lot of what I would call shadowboxing, where they are trying to make moves for the media, but the reality is that behind the scenes not much seems to have changed regardless of sanctions, etc. I guess he was as candid as he could be with me.

So I'll leave it at that.

Would you like us to put all our questions and then...?

● (1550)

The Chair: Sure, and, Mr. Bagnell, perhaps you'd like to give your questions too.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Thank you.

I'm the chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Burma. There are about 40 MPs and senators from all the parties. We certainly appreciate what Canada has done in the last decade.

I just came back from six solid days of meetings on the border, the first MP probably in a decade in the area I went to. I met with student groups, rebels, National League for Democracy people, prisoners, etc., and ambassadors of China and India. As you said, the rapes, the killings, the displacements, the extrajudicial killings are still going on, and it's awful.

So we appreciate what's been done so far, but they told us other things that could be done, some of which we've asked of the government. We'd just like to ask if you're willing to do some of the following things.

First, there has been a group of 14 countries, which we're hoping Canada will join, recently established to fight against this awful situation.

Secondly, our group, members of all parties, put forward a 10-point plan a couple of months ago to the minister, on some of which actions have been taken, which is great, but there are other actions in there.

They would like help with their constitutional development. It was great that you stopped any new Canadian investment, but they would like to get rid of existing Canadian investment. As you know, one of the companies was, at one time, the fourth largest producer of income to the dictatorship.

They'd like a UN political presence in Burma.

They'd like more aid. Last night, the minister mentioned \$300 million for Palestine, which is great, but only \$2 million to Burma, in this awful situation.

So I wonder if you would be willing to look at any of those things that the Burmese people are asking for and that the Parliamentary Friends of Burma hopefully will be asking for.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Wilfert and Mr. Bagnell, for those questions.

Mr. Mank.

Mr. Randolph Mank: Thank you very much. They're both very pertinent questions and are much appreciated.

I'll start with Mr. Wilfert's questions. First, regarding what we're doing diplomatically with other countries, and you have named three very key players in mentioning China and India and ASEAN, we're very conscious of the role these neighbours have in bringing influence to bear on Burma. In fact, we've been doing a number of things.

First, in the context of our work down at the UN, these are the kinds of counterpart diplomats we seek out to share information with on what we're doing. We give the Canadian point of view on what should be done by us, by the international community, and by neighbours, and so on and so forth. So those conversations, which happen at the diplomatic level, and for that reason are privileged, I can assure you, are going on.

At the same time, at Foreign Affairs and International Trade here in Ottawa, in keeping with regular diplomatic practice, we bring in diplomatic representatives, normally at the ambassadorial level, for conversations of a similar ilk. We use the opportunity to explain

what we're doing and to encourage others, if not to follow suit, which is our preference, to do as much as they possibly can to bring collective pressure to bear on the regime in Burma.

With regard to ASEAN, of course, we're a dialogue partner with ASEAN, so we have the right to have that conversation annually in the councils of ASEAN. Frankly, it's a conversation we've been having for a long time. Canada has actually been in the forefront in bringing pressure to bear on Burma for quite a number of years. What the government has done in deciding to move to sanctions is to ensure that Canada remains at the forefront in exerting that pressure. ASEAN partners know that. We have those conversations in the context of the normal meetings with ASEAN. But frankly, the minister certainly likes to ensure that there's more than that. He has deployed me, personally, to some capitals in ASEAN countries to carry that brief forward to ensure that it's well understood and to ensure that it's understood in the context of our expectations and hopes for Burma's neighbours in terms of taking action. Certainly, with Burma being a member of ASEAN, one does have expectations that ASEAN will take a firm line.

We were very pleased that in New York, during the UN General Assembly, the ASEAN leaders issued a very firm statement condemning the crackdown on the monks in Burma. So that was a very good development that was a positive sign. We've seen that all these countries have joined in a kind of consensus on what the end game should be: the Burmese regime should have a dialogue with the opposition, should move on the path of democracy, and should get its house in order, essentially. There are differences of view, of course, in the approach, but essentially, there's very little disagreement on what we all think collectively should be the way forward in Burma.

•(1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Mank.

We'll go to the next questioner, who is Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Barbot, you have seven minutes.

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

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for helping us understand the situation.

I am very pleased that the Government of Canada has implemented certain sections of the report that the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee adopted on December 1, 2004.

Furthermore, I salute the sanctions taken by Canada against the military regime, even though these sanctions are not retroactive. We wish they were, but we are still pleased with what has been done up to now.

My question is more specific. We are concerned about the fact that the money deducted weekly from the pay cheques of millions of Canadians for the Canada Pension Plan is invested in Canadian companies, which unfortunately are often socially and ecologically irresponsible. For example, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board invests over \$60 million in the largest Canadian business operating in Burma, Ivanhoe Mines, and this money benefits the military junta. But the Investment Board is still investing money in Ivanhoe, which is still present in Burma.

I wonder why the Canadian government does not require the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board to have ethics and transparency rules, follow-up and monitoring mechanisms, to make sure it does not invest in Canadian companies that are socially and ecologically irresponsible. It seems to us that this would ensure some consistency with the Canadian sanctions that have been adopted against Burma. On the one hand, we impose sanctions while, on the other, we allow certain companies to go on investing. And, since it involves taxpayers' money, it leaves sort of a bitter taste.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

Mr. Hannaford.

[Translation]

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford (Director General and Deputy Legal Adviser, , Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you very much.

Perhaps I can say a few words about financial sanctions.

[English]

It's important. We're not in a position to discuss specific instances, and frankly, that falls outside our bailiwick. We're not responsible for the CPP or for the conduct of its investments.

What I can say, as a general matter, is that the sanctions that have been introduced under SEMA do deal with investments in a couple of ways. There is a prohibition on direct investment into Burma, and as a matter of indirect investments, there is prohibition with respect to investments that would amount to a controlling interest in an operation within Burma. So those are the two ways in which the existing measures that have been passed as a regulation to the Special Economic Measures Act have addressed the question of financial transactions of this sort.

The Chair: Mr. McGovern.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter McGovern (Director General, Bilateral Commercial Relations, Asia and Americas, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): In the particular case you mentioned, the company put this operation up for sale in a third party trust further to pressure from the government. This operation is for sale in Burma and the conflict does not arise from this investment in Burma.

• (1600)

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: All right.

Do I still have time?

[English]

The Chair: Madame Barbot, you still have three minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: My other question concerns the report to which the government responded, which was presented by the committee in December. In the wake of this report, should Canada not, as did Norway, Denmark and the United States, demonstrate its interest in, and support for, the government in exile, that is, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, and the committee representing the People's Parliament? Would that not be a way for Canada to express its support directly?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Mank.

[Translation]

Mr. Randolph Mank: Canada maintains relations with states, not with governments. So it is rather difficult to recognize the government in exile. We nevertheless have discussions from time to time to check whether the actions of the Government of Canada are consistent with the hopes of the democratic movement in Burma.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: With these exchanges, does Canada wish to show clearly that it has a certain sympathy for the people? For instance, it conferred citizenship on Aung San Suu Kyi. Is that such a gesture?

Mr. Randolph Mank: Obviously Canada greatly supports the democratic movement in Burma.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Barbot.

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai, and the government may split its time.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll split my time with my two colleagues.

Thank you very much for coming here.

I just want to make a little statement for my colleagues on the other side. During the recent visit that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I took to India, we raised this matter with the Indian foreign minister during our bilateral visit and asked for India's help in putting influence around this thing. So the matter was raised at the highest level with the Indian government. I won't say what the response was, but suffice it to say that we did put pressure on them. That's the piece of information I want you to know about. We are engaged in international diplomacy on this issue.

I'll hand it over to my colleague, Peter.

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

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

Mr. Mank, in your statement you had mentioned, of course, the more recent economic measures that have been brought to bear. At the same time, you also mentioned the earlier measures in 1997. Could you explain what some of the material differences would be between the two? What triggered or what initiated the first measures? If there were some differences in the two related measures, was there not some point in between where some of the other measures might have been initiated too? What triggers them at what different levels?

Mr. Randolph Mank: That's a very good question. I can say that the first set of measures, taken as a package, were largely a result of the actions of the government in Burma, the massive crackdown on peaceful protests in Burma in 1988. The Canadian government had always been concerned about things that were happening in Burma, but that historical event, where the security forces were shooting indiscriminately into crowds and killing people, led us then to start to look at what we could do. That's why that list of things that I mentioned to you was developed. It takes a bit of time to assess a situation and design the appropriate response, and that's what was felt to be appropriate at that time. It was actually putting Canada in front to some extent in showing the international community what should be done.

What we have now moved to here, in this case, is the reaction to yet another egregious violation of the human rights of the people of Burma. We felt that in this case we had reached a trigger point where they were endangering regional peace and security. I could ask my colleague, Mr. Hannaford, to explain that a little more deeply if you're interested, but essentially we felt it was time to take it up to another level, again in part because of the sanctions themselves and the effect they would have, but also in part to lead the international community to give it some sort of encouragement that we should all continue to put as much pressure as we possibly could.

• (1605)

Mr. Peter Goldring: If you could, please, keep in mind that the other further extension to this would be at what point in time would you decide to remove your diplomatic relations, cut off your diplomatic ties, because it seems to me that would be an additional step. And are there any steps between what you've instituted now and that ultimate and what is being considered now?

Mr. Randolph Mank: There are lots of potential steps, but it's always a decision for the political level as to what next measures one wants to take.

We have found having diplomatic relations is useful for the dialogue, and we are a country that is trying to encourage a dialogue internally there. So that's an avenue that hasn't been cut off at this point because of its utility to us essentially.

But I'll let Mr. Hannaford say a bit more about that.

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: Sure.

Thank you very much, Mr. Goldring, Mr. Chairman.

Without doing an exhaustive review of the regulations, suffice it to say that the earlier measures that were taken were under a range of different instruments, including the Export and Import Permits Act and those related to the movement of goods.

What has happened most recently is action has been taken pursuant to the Special Economic Measures Act, which was instituted in order to allow for more targeted sanctions in certain instances, and among those are situations that either are an international crisis or threaten to be an international crisis. So that's the triggering mechanism in this context. That was determined to be the case by the Governor in Council. Certain actions were taken, then—pursuant to the SEMA—in order to address the situation in Burma, and those include an export and an import ban, effectively.

The export ban is conditioned by the movement of humanitarian goods by fairly broad measures: an assets freeze; a ban on the transfer of technical data, which is a defined term that includes things like blueprints and other sorts of value-added goods; there are bans on investment, which we discussed earlier; a prohibition on provision of financial services; and then measures relating to both shipping and to the movement of airlines.

A lot of those measures do go beyond what was simply available in our other mechanisms. These are specific measures envisaged by SEMA that were taken as a result of their specific allowance under SEMA.

The Chair: Thank you. You do have more time but not much.

Mr. Kramp, perhaps you are willing to get a question in.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): I have half a dozen, but we'll play it by ear as we go along.

Mr. Bagnell made an interesting statement where he mentioned the figure of \$2 million, potentially, budgeted right now, to add to the hopes of the Burmese people. Quite frankly, regardless of whether there is \$2 million or \$200 million, do we have a vehicle by which we are able to offer assistance in a country that is really not that stable?

Could you comment on the stability and on our capacity to deliver assistance regardless of the dollar amount?

Mr. Randolph Mank: Yes. We don't have a bilateral development assistance program with Burma. That was cut off. That was one of the measures we took to express our displeasure with the way things were going some time ago.

The question of how to support the democracy movement is a very delicate one, because anything you do in public or talk about in public imperils these people, who are already in danger, even more. So one has to be extremely careful.

As I said earlier, it is clear where Canada's sympathies are, and in general, we of course want to support the pro-democracy movement.

• (1610)

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I just wanted—

The Chair: When we come back on the second round, Mr. Kramp, we will give you the first shot.

Mr. Dewar, please.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank our guests for being here today.

I want to pick up on SEMA. SEMA is a tool we have. It came into place, I believe, in 1992. We've used it in cases like Haiti and the former Yugoslavia, and in this case, in Burma.

I'll just pose the question and then we can decide who should answer it.

We could use SEMA to cover previous investments. What I see here now is a prohibition on new investment. Am I correct in saying that SEMA could be used to go after existing investments before the date it came into force most recently?

The Chair: Mr. Hannaford.

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: Thanks, Mr. Chair and Mr. Dewar.

We're a little limited on what we comment on in terms of other options that could or could not be pursued. I'm particularly limited just because I can't be in a position of offering legal advice in this context.

I can say that the measure that is in place does address new investments, but that can't be taken only in isolation. There is also the ban on provision of financial services and on certain transactions, which will obviously have a bearing on ongoing investment. This is to put in some context how the measure operates as it now stands.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Let's put it this way. If a company was doing business in Burma before the most recent use of SEMA in Burma... could we not cover companies that are presently investing in Burma?

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: As I say, Mr. Chair and Mr. Dewar, I'm a little limited in commenting on what we might or might not have done.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm just asking whether it could be used as a tool.

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: I'm afraid I have to stick to—

Mr. Paul Dewar: So no one here can tell me that? Who could tell me that?

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: I think—

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm not asking whether it should have been done. And I really am without prejudice.

The Chair: I agree with what Mr. Dewar is saying here, and you know your confines as well. Mr. Dewar is not asking you to say, "Oh, the government should have—"

Mr. Paul Dewar: Absolutely not. I'm the son of a public servant. I would never do that.

The Chair: He's wondering what boxes in this tool box are available for anyone to do.

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: I think part of the problem here, Mr. Chairman, is that it's challenging to give a definitive answer on the scope of these provisions, in part because we would be giving legal advice on that issue.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Let me try it this way.

In the case of Haiti and the former Yugoslavia, did we impose special economic measures against investments that had already existed in both Haiti and in the former Yugoslavia when we brought them into force? No, we haven't. Okay.

I hit a bit of a wall there, because we know that there are CPP investments that still exist, notwithstanding Ivanhoe putting things into a trust to sell off. Many people still have concerns about that, and I just want you to note that. In fact, what we're talking about here is SEMA, but also about corporate social responsibility. Perhaps another day we'll have a motion to discuss that.

Many Canadians are deeply concerned that there still are Canadian companies doing business in Burma. My question to you is, what tools do we have for Canadian companies to divest themselves from Burma now? Do we have none?

The Chair: Mr. Mank.

Mr. Randolph Mank: We certainly have some, and not all just legal approaches. We certainly have the moral suasion of the Government of Canada, which has been used over the years in an attempt to dissuade them from doing just that.

But on the legal side, I know your eye has locked onto this banning of new investment, and the word "new", and you're wondering what about "existing". But allow your eye to go to the next one, which is the prohibition on the provision of Canadian financial services to and from Burma. That's highly relevant to the disposition of current and existing investments.

•(1615)

Mr. Paul Dewar: I understand that.

Mr. Randolph Mank: If one is to extract profit from investment—and that's what investment is intended for—then presumably this aspect of the new economic measures will have some effect in that area.

This is something that was certainly thought through and considered, and we are as concerned about ongoing investments as you are.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I have no question about people's intent and concern. I want to be clear about that.

There are concerns about loopholes. I paid attention to your comments about indirect. You made the comment that indirect investments will be captured by the actions of the government, but you also said, where controlling interests apply. There are concerns about Total Oil, and you'll know that there are Canadian companies—Power Corporation, to be specific—who have investments in Total Oil. Would they be captured—I'm speaking directly about Total Oil—by the measures that have been brought forward by the government?

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: We're back into a situation where it's hard to discuss this specific instance, but what I can say is that you're right. The way the measure works, it is a ban on indirect investment, which amounts to a controlling interest in an entity that then would be operating in Burma. That is intended to be the trigger. It's partially for practical reasons that it becomes extremely challenging to have a look at situations in which you're looking at Burma.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Who would be privy to that information? Would shareholders be privy? Obviously, I'm not, because I'm hearing that information can't be disclosed for reasons....

In other words, I would appreciate knowing what companies have been captured by the SEMA vis-à-vis Burma. Is that information available to us as a committee? The fact that you brought in SEMA is great. I applaud it. I was hoping it would affect existing investments. I also think many Canadians would hope that it would deal with investments that some would say are a loophole through the indirect....

Is there any way to catalogue which Canadian companies are presently affected by the Special Economic Measures Act? It's good to have these policies, but if we don't know what companies are affected, and catalogue that, then it matters not to many of us, and we kind of say, well, that was nice, but what effect did it have?

So is there a listing of which companies, how many companies, and the net investment or divestment that has taken place to date? Do we have that kind of information?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. McGovern.

Mr. Peter McGovern: At this point we don't have an aggregated list of companies in Burma. We have been dealing with our mission in Thailand, which is responsible for relations with Burma. To our knowledge, there are very few companies that are active in the Burmese market. The number of direct investors, with Ivanhoe Mines now going into trust, is probably zero.

We have been in touch with other companies that were doing exploration work in Burma. In light of the situation, they withdrew prior to sanctions being imposed. The expectation of the Government of Canada is that the companies operating will, in and of themselves, be corporately socially responsible. Given the situation in Burma, there's a strong indication that it's not a place they would want to be.

We are always looking for indications of firms that are active, and we work with partners to ensure that we bring those to the attention of the appropriate authorities. But the numbers are very small. If you look at what we import from Burma, it includes frozen shrimp, mung beans, some textiles, and that's it. Our exports were down to about \$4,000 until November. So the transactions are of a very limited nature.

I can only speak about direct investment and commercial exchanges. I'm not in a position to know about the indirect activity of Canadian firms that may be present in Burma. Again, I would suggest it is very small.

• (1620)

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

Mr. Kramp.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The situation in Burma is one thing, but Mr. Mank used some words that I think are very telling, and we need to expand on them. You talked about the transnational regional impact; in other words, Burma is obviously not sitting there in isolation. I would like you to expand on that, if you would, particularly in relation to three or four areas: how isolated Burma is; who the players are in the market; who is supporting their activities; and to what extent their activities are

being supported in two particular ways—in obvious ways, but also through the back-door channels.

Can you give us some indication of this?

The Chair: Mr. Mank.

Mr. Randolph Mank: Sure, because it is obviously very relevant. Burma is isolated from the international community. They are behaving in a way that only a very isolated country would, and that has been the case for quite some time now.

At the same time, as you're alluding, they do have some relationships for commercial and other purposes that have allowed them to sustain the regime they've had in place, which is very controlling of their own population's wishes.

The neighbouring countries have been doing most of the trade with the country. We know who their principal trading partners are. Obviously they rely on that trade in order to sustain the economy such as it is. But it isn't much. If you look at the actual size of that economy, their GDP is just under \$14 billion. That adds up to about \$239 per capita—I'm using some IMF figures here; those are numbers that we often look to when we want to see the state of a country.

There's another statistic I look at when I want to see what the state of a country is, and that is infant mortality. It is a country that has 75 deaths per 1,000 births, which is extraordinary.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Yes, but we are getting away from my point, with all due respect.

I'm concerned about other countries and/or regional countries having an impact on them. Are they aiding and abetting? You said they're totally isolated. It's very difficult to believe they can survive in total isolation. How effective are we in dealing with people who are contributing to this problem?

Mr. Randolph Mank: Exactly. If they weren't isolated at all, you wouldn't have those statistics I just gave you. That's a country that's very rich in natural resources. In the 1960s it was meant to be one of the tigers of the future. It isn't that.

So it's isolated to a large extent. However, it's not isolated completely. The countries that are neighbouring on Burma and doing trade with it—the countries of ASEAN, India, China, and Russia, principally—are doing business with Burma. That's public knowledge. There's nothing secret about that, and that's why we have the conversations with those countries to see the extent to which we can convince them to bring pressure to bear.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: They obviously haven't moved with the same severity of condemnation as Canada. To what extent would you consider their movement?

Mr. Randolph Mank: That's true. They have not moved to the same extent that we have. We're trying to demonstrate leadership to them, in particular, as well as to others. It's one thing to be demonstrating leadership to close allies like the EU and the United States and countries that are like-minded. It's another thing to convince countries that have perhaps different interests and different perceptions of a problem, and we have been explaining our position and trying to persuade, but they do take a different approach.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Thank you for being here today; it is very interesting.

I am not usually on this committee, but I would like to know what else Canada can do to support democracy and ensure respect for the law in Burma and likewise ensure respect for human rights. Since I am a neophyte in this area, I would very much like to understand what more Canada can do in future.

• (1625)

Mr. Randolph Mank: The challenge is to find other means of pressure. We have made a lot of efforts to organize a collective international response, in order to increase pressure on the regime in Burma. We are trying to figure out what else we can do. This is the challenge awaiting us in future.

[English]

Maybe, as I didn't get to answer Mr. Bagnell, whose question relates directly to what you just asked.... These ideas that have been put forward, in the ten points you referred to, have lots of interesting elements, and as I've just said, we're always looking for new things to do. We will continue on Burma to see what we can do next to increase the pressure, and I'm sure the government will be considering other options in the future. There will be decisions that will be taken at the political level, but we haven't cornered the market on ideas, so we're always interested in inputs from other people.

The Chair: Madame Dion.

Ms. Adèle Dion (Director General, Human Security and Human Rights Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you.

I'd like to add to what Mr. Mank has said. We are going to continue pressing at the United Nations as well, in both New York and in Geneva. There was a special session on Burma at the Human Rights Council in Geneva in October, and there will be a report presented at the upcoming session in March at the Human Rights Council, as a result of the visit of the special rapporteur on Burma. We do hope there will be recommendations in his report that we can be very active in pursuing, to put more pressure at the international level on the regime.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Dion, and thank you, Madame Boucher, again.

Mr. Chan.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Richmond, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to the committee. I have the highest regard for the department. DFAIT has been working very hard on this file. You mentioned earlier it's been 20 years since we tried to sanction Burma. If you look at the volume we're doing with them, I'm sure anything we do now is going to have very marginal effects.

Following the line of questioning of my colleagues, Mr. Wilfert and Mr. Kramp, I would like to understand a bit more about the other countries that might have more leverage in the situation, like India, China, and ASEAN. Can you explain to the committee the size of

their relationship with China, with India, and all the ASEANs, and what it means to Burma? Also, what does it mean to China to not be hard on Burma? Why are they behaving that way? Might we be able to find some leverage from those nations that we might exercise in the international arena?

Also, to Madame Dion, what tool does the UN have with that kind of information? It's very nice to have the human rights report, but if the UN cannot be effective on this matter, it won't be any use. I'll leave my questions at that. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Mr. Mank.

Mr. Randolph Mank: I don't want to be put in the position of trying to explain why Chinese foreign policy is what it is, or Indian or anybody else's besides Canadian.

But look again at the data. The total exports of that country, Burma, were \$3.6 billion in the most recently recorded year; imports were \$2 billion. It does not have a burgeoning trading partnership with anybody.

It is a country that's not completely isolated, but isolated to the point where it has abysmal conditions for its people. So there isn't a whole lot of interest for anybody, as far as we can see, except that it's a country rich in natural resources. It's also a country of significant population. It's a country importantly situated in Southeast Asia. Those are perspectives that obviously are brought to bear.

In terms of the UN, I'll let Ms. Dion answer that, but I would note that it is progress that Mr. Gambari was allowed to go in and it is progress that he was able to, first of all, meet Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been completely isolated from outside contact for a long time. Third, he was able to broker a dialogue, so the Government of Burma identified a minister of their cabinet, whose name is Major General Aung Kyi, to be the dialogue partner with Aung San Suu Kyi, and they have been having a dialogue. They have allowed Aung San Suu Kyi to have meetings with her own party as well.

So there's a bit of progress there; it's not nearly enough. But I think that's a credit to the UN and to all this collective pressure we've joined in bringing in behind the UN bilaterally, multilaterally, and so on.

• (1630)

The Chair: Madame Dion, did you want to add to what your colleague said?

Ms. Adèle Dion: Yes, to continue on the UN theme, because Burma is isolated.... It is a member of the United Nations. It very much values that the UN provides it with a forum to have a bit of respectability at the international level. The regime's desire to continue to be a participant there is actually a very useful lever.

As Mr. Mank said, we're very fortunate with Mr. Gambari, who is a very skilled Nigerian diplomat and actually has been able to make some considerable progress. Equally, the special rapporteur, Mr. Pinheiro, who is a Brazilian, has been in the international system for a very long time. He is very skilled at using the leverage that the UN and the Human Rights Council have given him.

Two opportunities will be coming up. The first opportunity is when Mr. Pinheiro presents his report in Geneva in March. It will provide the occasion for a dialogue. Canada and others will be able to take the floor and ask him very specific questions to highlight how bad the situation is in Burma and specific instances of human rights abuses that he was able to gather information on.

Also, the Human Rights Council has a new tool that's called "universal periodic review". This tool will require that all members of the UN submit to an extensive review of their human rights records every four or five years. Burma will be coming up for a review in 2011, which is not immediately, but it certainly will provide an opportunity for a very comprehensive review of the situation and a dialogue with representatives of the regime.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Dion.

We'll go to Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I know that we cannot expect very fast results, in view of the sanctions that have been taken. My concern is the civil population.

What are the effects on the population and what is the situation like on the ground?

• (1635)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

Mr. John F. G. Hannaford: Perhaps I could address that question. The way the sanctions have been framed is intended, at least in part, to reflect humanitarian concerns. For instance, although the export ban is comprehensive, the one exception is with respect to goods necessary for humanitarian purposes.

Similarly, although the financial services ban is quite broad, there's an exemption for remittances of a non-commercial nature under \$1,000, which is intended to make sure the most vulnerable folks in the society are not captured by a general prohibition on financial services.

There is an effort to try to reflect the needs of people who are most vulnerable in Burmese society and not to address the sanctions specifically to them.

Furthermore, the asset ban, which again is quite broad, addresses only people who are listed at the back end of the regulation. Those are intended to be the most senior members of Burmese society and not those members of civil society who are particularly vulnerable.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Of course, that is the purpose, but we know that, in a country already in a difficult position, people cannot always take advantage of their civil rights. When there are sanctions, it is the most vulnerable who become even more vulnerable. Certain measures are being taken, but can you tell me more specifically whether the situation has deteriorated? We might think there will be changes in the near future. Are there any signs of improvement, or are the people having a harder time?

Mr. Randolph Mank: I will be frank; the situation has not improved at all. The Government of Canada is still worried about the

safety of individuals, and to a large extent the protesters are in prisons in Rangoon. This situation is not at all acceptable for Canada. The approach, attitude and interactions with the democratic movement, etc. have to be changed. The situation is still unacceptable.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

Mr. Dewar, did you have a quick question?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Absolutely, but I was just thinking of the word "quick".

I understand the difference between exports and imports, but I really want to focus on investment. Would it surprise you that people have calculated that at present there is about \$1.2 billion in Canadian indirect investment in Burma through our CPP? Is that something that would surprise anyone who is looking at that, the fact that it's not the exports or imports, but investments in Burma of \$1.2 billion through our CPP?

Have you heard that number? Is that a surprise to you? Do you find that to be a little exaggerated?

Mr. Peter McGovern: I really can't comment. I think it would have to be up to the people who deal with our financial institutions, and that's not the trade side of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

It is a startling number.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I would like to pursue that further. Perhaps we'll get in touch on how we can do that.

I have two last quick questions. One is to Ms. Dion, regarding the commission on human security at the UN. Is this something we've been seized with? Do we have a representative there? Is this something the commission on human security has been dealing with?

The Chair: Madame Dion.

Ms. Adèle Dion: There is not a commission on human security at the UN. There is the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and then there's a new commission being stood up in New York, the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Maybe I should have put my question there.

Ms. Adèle Dion: The Peacebuilding Commission is basically still standing itself up. They have not yet decided which countries they're going to focus on.

For the record, we are not currently a member of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Dion.

What I'm going to do, because Mr. Bagnell has begged and pleaded, is allow Mr. Bagnell to ask one of the final questions of our guests.

• (1640)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you. It's very short.

These guys are bad, obviously. They drive five-inch spikes into monks' heads to kill them. I want to give you a chance to answer the questions, because I know you didn't have time to answer some of them.

Also, the General Assembly can stop Burmese delegations from going places. Could we join in that, use not just regional unrest but also the responsibility to protect? Could we help them to develop their constitution? The European countries have. Could we lobby for a UN political presence in Burma? There is room for more foreign aid; I saw it there—in schools, health care, education, and food for refugees.

Could we lobby for a resale treaty so that no country in the world could sell arms...or have a condition for selling arms so that they don't go by a third country to Burma? This sometimes happens, and then they say they're not selling to Burma.

We called for the release of the political prisoners again this week—the 1988...some of them have gone up; it's over 1,800—and for an independent monitor like the Red Cross for those prisoners.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bagnell.

Mr. Randolph Mank: Again, they are all interesting ideas, some of which have been studied or are under study and being considered. Some have some difficulties and some have potential. We are always, as I said, looking for that kind of input. I've taken some notes here. We'll be looking at that and at other things that Canada might do, hoping that we can remain in the forefront as we have.

At the end of the day, if there's any glimmer of good news in this horrible story of Burma, it is the fact that countries like Canada have been taking rather extraordinary measures to show that even though we might be far away geographically, we're not missing any of those actions that they're taking against their people. The world is watching. Even countries quite far away geographically are watching their every move, and we're willing to react in ways that we possibly can and looking for new ways to react, including potentially some of those things you mentioned.

These sanctions are not designed to go after any particular firm or firms. They are what they are, and firms that stand in contravention or act outside of this law have to deal with the consequences of that. It's not designed for one company, but it doesn't exempt any. There's nobody who is immune from the law as it's passed. It is what it is. We think it has power in its application and we think it will have some effect.

More important is the impulse it gives internationally in showing that Canada is going to continue to lead on this. We will continue to encourage all of the other countries, including the neighbours, to do what they can to bring pressure to bear so that this regime will change. That's the bottom line, and I think everybody agrees with it.

The Chair: Certainly, as a committee, I think we would all agree with that.

I'll say as a Canadian, too, that it gives me a lot of pride in our country when I see the citizens of Canada. In rural Alberta I had a group of students come to my office just to make sure we understood the concerns they had about the country of Burma. It's one of the countries about which a lot of people have caught on as to what the

difficulties are therein—they see the Buddhist monks being persecuted, I guess, and Canadians respond.

So it's good that you have been able to come today and to tell us a little bit about what we've done as a country. Certainly we will continue to appreciate knowing that we can do more and that we are doing everything we can. Burma being a colony up to 1948.... We've seen India, which has just exploded with its strong economy and potential. There are still concerns in India, but then Burma goes the other way.

Thanks again for coming. We appreciate it.

Mr. Obhrai.

• (1645)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I want to be on the record.

In regard to many of the questions the NDP asked in reference to investment and its legality, which the officials weren't able to answer today, I think we can ask our researcher to look at many of those questions and to get the answers for you.

The Chair: To the department, I know you've appeared before the committee before. If, in reflecting on some of the things you have said today, you feel you can provide us with more information—within the guidelines you have—on any of the questions you have been asked, I can tell you as a committee that we would certainly appreciate that.

Thanks again for coming.

We will suspend for two minutes.

We will allow our guests to leave, and we will move into committee business.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (1650)

The Chair: All right, committee, we will bring this back into committee business.

Our first responsibility here is to take a look at what our steering committee passed at the Tuesday meeting.

I have a feeling that what we heard today with regard to Burma may be quite a bit of what we may hear with regard to Sudan—just to be aware of that.

I will ask our clerk to explain. She has tried to get hold of different witnesses for the Sudan part.

Go ahead.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Angela Crandall): In the steering committee we discussed having witnesses on the two motions, one on the situation in Somalia and the other on the situation on Sudan and investment.

The departments are available to come on Somalia, and CIDA and Foreign Affairs are available for Sudan, but it's really International Trade that would take the lead on that if we want to hear about investment. They have come back to me this morning and said the best people they have for that issue aren't available next week. They should be available the week after, so the committee might want to reconsider holding the briefing on Sudan until a later date and perhaps do the hour on Somalia and then committee business next week.

Also, there were no discussions about what the committee wanted to do next Thursday.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, Madame Barbot, then Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chair, to respond to the clerk, yes, we can look at the logistics to get a proper report on Sudan. However, part of what we discussed at the steering committee was that the clerk would look at the availability of Mr. John Manley to appear before the committee. Since I have put a motion and there is a motion from them and we're doing the Afghanistan report study, I would like to propose my amendment to see if the committee will accept that, and if so, then we'd move into that area as soon as possible, considering that we were, on the basis of a couple of things.... There is a motion out there on Afghanistan. We are doing a report on Afghanistan. The faster we do it...because my motion also calls for more witnesses as well as this. So if the committee agrees, I can rephrase my motion to address that.

The reason I'm bringing this up, Mr. Chair—

• (1655)

The Chair: Yes, that's what I'd like to hear.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: —is because of the time schedule. The time is available now. You were saying that on Monday afternoon we will not have that, if we postpone Sudan, due to the availability of others. That's why I'm bringing the point out that in trying to fill the time, we could try to look at this motion. If there is availability, due to the fact that Sudan may be pushed further down, we would want to fill in that position. That's why I'm bringing up this point.

The Chair: All right. I appreciate that. Thank you.

We would still have a presentation. But did the trade department say it would not provide anyone, or was it the best people?

The Clerk: They said the best people, which means they probably would prefer not to provide someone who is less than the best.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I am trying to understand what we are doing. Is the first thing not to go back to the program that the steering committee established to see whether everyone is in agreement, before going on to something else?

[English]

The Chair: That's what we're doing.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: What are we talking about exactly, sir?

[English]

The Chair: We're speaking on point number 3. We've already passed the Burma thing that we're doing today. We're discussing the second point here, because on what our steering committee has talked about with Sudan and Somalia, the one witness from the trade department isn't available. What we're discussing is what we will do in that case.

Mr. Patry, did you want...?

I have Mr. Dewar first.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Just on the Sudan study and divestment, after hearing the witnesses today, it might be a good idea to also invite—I was talking to Mr. McGovern—Finance. So if we could invite the relevant people from Finance.... As you could tell from the back-and-forth questioning with Mr. McGovern and Mr. Hannaford as well, they weren't able to tell me everything I was hoping they would. I asked him afterwards and he said Finance would be helpful there. So could we include them?

I wonder if we have invitations out to people in the civil society as well.

The Clerk: The committee hasn't provided any witnesses yet on Sudan.

Mr. Paul Dewar: That's what I was wondering. I will make sure we get those to you promptly.

So I would be in favour of waiting until we can coordinate it.

The Chair: Do you want to postpone it?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: All right. Also, the clerk will take note that we extend this invitation on the finance part as well.

I have Mr. Chan and Mr. Obhrai.

Hon. Raymond Chan: Mr. Chair, I have two points. I welcome having the NGOs and civil society representatives along, but I think we probably will not have enough time in that hour to have both the officials and the civil society representatives as witnesses.

The Chair: We might need more time then.

Hon. Raymond Chan: We will probably need more time.

The second point I want to make is that I don't know, because I'm new to the committee, whether the committee has ever had witnesses that deal diplomatically on the international community side. I heard that this is going to be led by the.... You have? Okay, then maybe I'll look up....

The Chair: Do you mean on the Sudan?

Hon. Raymond Chan: I mean on the Sudan and Darfur stuff. Things might have changed, and I don't know when the last time was that you had them.

The Chair: Have we had people on Sudan recently?

The Clerk: We haven't had them on Sudan. We've had them on other issues.

The Chair: But it is a precedent that we have from other cases, so—

Hon. Raymond Chan: Right. On the Sudan issue, I know that the economic side is probably very important, but I think equally important is the political side. I think we should not lose sight of the political efforts we can bring to bear on the problem. So along with the same motion, besides looking at the economic and financial side, we should examine and call witnesses to deal with the political side.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai, Mr. Dewar, and Mr. Patry.

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

We have absolutely no objections to what the opposition is saying with reference to studying Sudan. At the end of the day, it's always good to do a very good, comprehensive study, taking all aspects into account, to ensure that our reports do carry credibility and are not shifted to one side.

Having said that, now that we have time, I would like to go back, if the committee agrees, to propose an amended motion for the—

The Chair: We're not ready yet. We're still on the Somalia motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: You will find no objections from us at all.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai. I like that.

We have Mr. Dewar and then Mr. Patry.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I have just a point of clarification for Mr. Chan. Of course, we were looking at divestment and the economics around that, and that does relate to the political situation. It was similar, I guess, to the discussion we just had with the panel on Burma, with respect to what Canada can do vis-à-vis the horrific situation going on in the Sudan. We look at the divestment policy kit.

I wouldn't be against inviting other guests, but certainly the intent of the motion was to look at a very focused study on divestment.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

We'll go to Mr. Patry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I just want to be sure where we're going. We're still on the second report. We're not there.

If you are on the third paragraph concerning Somalia and Sudan, I agree, but I want to discuss the last item, on the standing committee, before we go to any amendment on any issue on anything else.

The Chair: Are you referring to the Manley deal?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, I want to know what—

The Chair: Yes, we're going to get there.

Mr. Bernard Patry: When we get there, I want to speak on this.

The Chair: What have we decided, then? Are we going to wait or are we going to proceed?

Mr. Paul Dewar: I think there was a consensus to wait until we can get the appropriate witnesses.

The Chair: Does the committee then want to hear about Somalia on the Tuesday?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, if we're ready.

The Chair: Are we ready for Somalia? All right, so that's a check on that.

The clerk was also asked by our steering committee to inquire into the availability of Mr. John Manley to appear before the committee. If my memory serves me correctly—and I know Mr. Wilfert isn't here, but Madame Barbot and Mr. Dewar and Mr. Obhrai were here—we said we would discuss Mr. Obhrai's motion in regard to Mr. John Manley appearing before our committee in response to the Manley panel report that was brought forward.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Can I, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: This still isn't the time for your motion—not quite yet, not quite yet.

The clerk has checked into the availability of Mr. Manley.

The Clerk: Yes. As I explained to the steering committee on Tuesday, I spoke with a representative—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Chairman, you are not entertaining my motion, but the motion calls for calling Mr. Manley. And for you to say that it isn't time yet, when you're jumping ahead of the—

The Chair: No, I'm just going to have her check on the availability. Then I'm going to you, and then Mr. Patry.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: No, but by looking at the availability issue, you are already saying that we need to call Mr. Manley.

The Chair: No, we're going through the steering committee report. I'm going to have the clerk explain whether she has checked on the availability of Mr. Manley. Then we're going to pass this—

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Chair, on a point of order—I agree with you, and I support you—I just want to say that perhaps we can first hear from the clerk about availability and then move on.

Thank you.

The Chair: That's what I was doing.

Continue, Madam Clerk. Everyone is waiting for what you have to say.

The Clerk: As I explained to the steering committee on Tuesday, I checked for Mr. Manley's availability. I was told that he is either out of Ottawa or has meetings scheduled for pretty much every Tuesday and Thursday, and all the other days as well, until February 28, but that he would possibly be available on Monday, February 11, from 3:30 to 5:30.

So the committee has the possibility of changing its meeting, if it wishes, to hear from Mr. Manley on that day. We could have our meeting then rather than the one on Thursday of that week.

• (1705)

The Chair: Mr. Patry, and then Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Okay, that's the availability part. That's what we have in front of us. Now we either accept or don't accept the second report, and then see if we want to have Mr. Manley or not. But we first need to accept the report.

So we've been told about the availability, and now we're going to vote. The availability doesn't mean that we're going to agree or disagree on the report.

The Chair: Correct, yes.

Mr. Obhrai, on this point.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: So you are going to let me talk.

The Chair: No.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: What kind of chairman do I have here?

An hon. member: He's a Conservative.

The Chair: Continue, Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I know what Bernard is saying about procedure and all these things, but I'm having a little difficulty here. I really am having difficulty. The motion that I have put forward, if we discuss it in a comprehensive manner, with the dates the clerk has proposed, would put this whole thing into the picture and move it forward.

What you're trying to do here—with all due respect to you, Mr. Chair—is you're trying to put a little potion on here in order to fix it. But at the end of the day, when we have the bigger debate, we're going to start having difficulties with that. I suggest we look at the bigger picture here and try to put all the i's and t's together.

My motion doesn't call only for Mr. Manley. It calls also for other witnesses—the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of International Cooperation. It calls for everybody inclusively.

The Chair: Exactly.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: For that reason, I'm saying—

The Chair: But I have to stick with procedure, Mr. Obhrai, and this is before us. This is the steering committee report. What we have to do is pass this report so that we can do—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: If I recall correctly, Mr. Wilfert had said that he would provide the response to my motion today, in the steering committee.

The Chair: No, in committee business...or today, yes.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: We are in committee business.

The Chair: I'm hoping we can talk to that motion today. I'm not certain if the opposition will allow it, but I would think—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I will put my argument. They're nice people, very understanding people, so I'm sure with my argument they will listen.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Obhrai, for that interjection.

Madame Barbot on this.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: We had not decided whether Mr. Manley would come to the committee. We have to decide today. At the end of the second report, instead of saying “to appear before the Committee,” we could say “to appear eventually.” This way it would be clear that we have not decided he should come.

[*English*]

The Chair: This was the report we did on Tuesday. This has already happened. You're saying, then, that we amend it, that the clerk inquire—as she already has done—into the availability of Mr. Manley to appear before the committee. But that doesn't mean we're going to call him.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Eventually.

The Chair: Okay, she wants the word “eventually”.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: That is entirely in keeping with what he said.

[*English*]

The Chair: It really doesn't add anything, that the clerk inquire as to whether or not he's able to come to committee. That doesn't mean she's booking him.

We have to know if he's available in February, in March—

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Why do we have to know that?

The Chair: In case we decide to call him.

Do I have a motion, then, Mr. Dewar?

Mr. Paul Dewar: I just want to quickly point to the fact that the motion in front of us doesn't preclude us from inviting Mr. Manley; that's established. We'd asked to see when he was available. That's been done.

If we're going to Mr. Obhrai's motion next, is that the order? I'm just trying to follow the bouncing ball around here.

The Chair: I'll tell you what. We had a commitment from Mr. Wilfert that we would deal with it on Thursday. We asked, all of us, and we said we'd deal with it on Thursday.

• (1710)

Mr. Paul Dewar: There are some other petitions that we'll have to deal with—

The Chair: There are other motions there. I think whether it's a yes or a no, the commitment was made for the Thursday. So that's what we have to know, one way or the other.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Which Thursday are you talking about?

The Chair: This Thursday, today.

Mr. Bernard Patry: To discuss what?

The Chair: Inviting Mr. Manley.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, we can discuss inviting him. We didn't decide it yet.

The Chair: No.

Can we adopt this report, and then we'll move into the motions?

All those in favour of adopting this report?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right. Now we're going to go into committee business.

Again, I'm going to bring this forward because there are some timelines here.

Mr. Obhrai did bring a motion to the steering committee. It was given the 48 hours' notice. The other motions appearing here are before him in precedence, undoubtedly, but there was a commitment that we would discuss Mr. Obhrai's motion at Thursday's committee business. So if it's still the will of the committee to bring that motion forward, we can discuss it and get a yes or a no.

Proceed, Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: In light of the information I received, and in light of what Mr. Dewar talked about with the chair, I think it would be appropriate that I amend this motion.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Yes, but we didn't decide yet if you could speak to your motion. I'm sorry.

The Chair: I'm just asking if we can go ahead.

Mr. Bernard Patry: We didn't decide yet. You're going too fast. Sorry about that.

The Chair: Deepak signified that he wanted to speak on this. Again, I'm in the hands of the committee here.

Mr. Bernard Patry: What did you discuss with Mr. Wilfert and the people who were present at the steering committee? You decided that we were going to discuss it today? No. It's ten minutes past five. We finish at 5:30. We can discuss it at 25 minutes past five. So you could have the other motion.

For me, there is a precedent. You're causing a precedent that anyone who comes with a motion at the end should get precedence over the other motions before it.

I don't have any motion there. I just don't care about this. We could discuss it any time, there's no problem in discussing it, but—

The Chair: What I'm asking is if we can have the committee give us the go-ahead to move to that motion.

Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Mr. Wilfert said that we were going to talk about it, but if you recall, I stressed at the last meeting that the motion had not been proposed and that it was therefore not admissible. The motion is admissible today and it is only today that we can decide what to do about it. I pointed out to you that all the discussion we had about the motion was practically pointless since we did not have a motion; it was not translated and we did not receive it.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's correct.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: That is the reality. We have to decide whether, yes or no, we introduce this motion ahead of the others, regardless of what Mr. Wilfert has said.

[*English*]

The Chair: That is correct. Madame Barbot has hit the nail on the head. Today we have to discuss whether we can do that.

All I'm saying is that on Tuesday it wasn't the 48 hours—Madame Barbot is correct. We said we wanted to get direction. Did we want to have the committee come before us? The point we made at steering committee was that would be fairly quick. Then they said, we don't want to even discuss it because we'll discuss it on Thursday. So what I'm asking is, is it all right, then, to move into that motion to discuss whether or not we would invite Mr. Manley to appear?

Then I would ask Mr. Obhrai to introduce his motion, but I need your will to do that.

Is that all right, Madame Barbot? Are we okay with that?

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Yes.

The Chair: That being stated, Mr. Obhrai, then, if you would like to introduce your motion and tell us a bit about—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I would like to amend my motion, in light of information that came.

The Chair: I can read his motion. It reads:

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a) that the committee meet jointly at its first opportunity with the Standing Committee....

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Although you are reading a motion, in light of what has happened, as Mr. Dewar pointed out in the steering committee, in reference to what had happened at the defence committee, I have an amendment to this motion.

The Chair: Let's continue here and then we'll hear your amendment, Mr. Obhrai. It further reads:

...the committee meet jointly at its first opportunity with the Standing Committee on National Defence to discuss the Manley report, and that the chairmanship....

And it goes on.

So that's the motion.

Mr. Obhrai, you have an amendment.

• (1715)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes, I have an amendment.

In light of the fact that the defence committee this afternoon did not want to meet jointly, and neither did Mr. Dewar want to miss....

Mr. Bernard Patry: I told you this and I told you to check with him.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: You told me that.

So I say in this particular instance that the reference to the joint committee be taken out completely, that we don't meet with them, and that we do meet, but we call John Manley and all the members of the independent panel as well as the Ministers of National Defence, Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, adding further witnesses—I have to emphasize “adding further witnesses”—to provide their perspective on this report.

Now, let me say this, Mr. Patry, and to my colleagues on the other side. We are studying Afghanistan. The defence committee was not, but we are. It's part of the report on our side here. So it is important for us to get that perspective in there, both from the ministers and.... It seems to me a little thin that throughout last year, when Mr. Patry was the vice-chair, if I'm not mistaken, they kept saying they wanted ministers, they wanted to hear....

Now we have an opportunity here. It does not matter whether you agree or you disagree with the Manley report or what the report recommends or what it does. But it provides us with the opportunity to ask questions of everyone and to get a broader perspective on it. I am more interested that if we are going to put an Afghanistan report out there that it listen to everyone. If I recall correctly, Mr. Dewar was a little upset when he did not get his NGOs to talk about Burma because they did not think the Burma report was a complete report.

Using the same argument, we imply over here that we listen to everyone, the ministers and everything. So I am asking that this motion be amended following this and that the foreign affairs committee call Mr. Manley as part of our report, to be involved in our report.

The Chair: I think you're probably correct, given what's going on over there. You basically are asking for the same thing, other than that you're no longer meeting jointly. So the amended motion is in order.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Call the vote on the amendment to delete the first paragraph.

The Chair: All right. Do we have an agreement to allow him to amend the first paragraph of it, and then we'll vote on the amendment to the motion?

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Now I'm going to allow Mr. Obhrai to speak to his motion and we will have debate on the motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I don't know why.

The Chair: You were speaking to your amendment. Now I'm giving you the opportunity to speak...as amended.

An hon. member: Read your motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: It's the same thing.

The Chair: Okay, if you choose not to speak, we would all welcome that as well. I notice your own colleagues are even nodding.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Listen, my arguments stay the same as what I just gave, as to why we want to do it. And I think we will. So I agree, and you can call the question.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, we need to discuss it before calling the question.

The Chair: Did you want to talk?

Mr. Bernard Patry: Sure, I want to talk.

You need to be realistic, Deepak. You asked us to meet with Mr. Manley and all the members of the independent panel, the Ministers of National Defence, Foreign Affairs, CIDA, and many others. Do you want to have just Mr. Manley, the minister with Mr. Manley, or just Mr. Manley with his panel? That's the first question on the first paragraph.

Now, on the second paragraph, you have that these deliberations need to be on a Tuesday and a Thursday between 3:30 and 5:30 in the afternoon.

The Chair: That has been—

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, no. You just told us that Mr. Manley was not available on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Chair: No, what I'm saying here is—

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, no. We haven't touched this paragraph yet. You touched a little bit on—

The Chair: No, this wasn't taken out, right? It would read, “And that the joint committees—”

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, we didn't take it out. We just took out the first paragraph, that the Standing Committee on National Defence—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Sorry, we have taken it out.

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, we didn't. We're going step by step.

The Chair: No, he amended it without reading, that—

• (1720)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I didn't read it, but we've taken it out.

Mr. Bernard Patry: If you didn't read it, I cannot take it out. I voted on the first paragraph, that the Standing Committee on National Defence—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: When did you become a bureaucrat, my friend?

Mr. Bernard Patry: No, it's not bureaucratic; the thing needs to be done in a proper way.

Hon. Raymond Chan: Why don't you read the whole amendment, so we know what we are talking about?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Can I read the whole amendment again?

Mr. Bernard Patry: That's what I asked you to do in the beginning: read your proposition. And you wanted to vote right away without reading your proposal? Read your proposition and we'll discuss your proposition.

Go ahead.

The Chair: Just hang on here.

It's the chair's view that this, as amended, was exactly what they had done. I looked over here at the clerk to check. That's where he stopped the reading.

That other paragraph, stating “that the joint proceedings occur during the ordinary scheduled time”, is facilitating the joint committee meeting. That was the part taken out.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes, because we are not meeting with the joint committee, as I said, so that portion does not apply. That was the whole idea.

You're absolutely right, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: So now, Mr. Bureaucrat—

The Chair: I think we're all right now.

We still understand what the amended motion was.

Continue.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Can I now read the amended motion?

The Chair: Read your amended motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: The amended motion states:

Pursuant to standing order 108(1)(a), that the committee meet to discuss the Manley Report

and that the committee call the Hon. John Manley and all members of the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, the ministers of National Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, with the option of adding further witnesses to provide their perspectives on this report;

that the committee table a copy of the evidence;

that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report;

and that these meetings be televised.

The Chair: So that's the two paragraphs that I stated earlier would be taken out.

So we're okay there, Mr. Patry?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Are you okay, Mr. Patry?

Mr. Bernard Patry: I'm okay. You read it, but I disagree. I disagree on some things.

You said "that the committee table a copy of the evidence", and "that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report". We don't do a report; we table the evidence. We don't do a report and we don't make any recommendations.

How can the government give a response if we don't give any recommendations to the government? Explain this to me. That's all.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I am.

The Chair: Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I will say two things, Mr. Chair. In my opinion, if Mr. Manley had wanted to see us, he could have come to see us while he was writing his report. He could have come to see the committee, but we were entirely excluded from this whole process. Which does not make me very sympathetic to the idea of inviting Mr. Manley. The report has been made and everyone has read it. It is public, we know how to read, we have read it and made notes on what it has to say.

I do not understand. The Manley report is not our business, so why are we asking the government to report to us on something that is totally beyond our jurisdiction? It is obvious. That is why I do not even understand why this request came to us. What are we supposed

to do with it? I have a very hard time understanding the rationale for this suggestion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Kramp, I had you on the speaking list, and I apologize because I think I just skipped over you.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Actually I just want to speak to the motion. Once we have a final motion, I will speak to the motion.

The Chair: Well, I think you heard it as it is presented here.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Okay. Just very briefly then, this is a very, very serious priority issue for all Canadians, whether you agree or disagree with everything from the Manley report to the direction the government is going or not going in and/or whatever. As such, I really feel we have a responsibility to bring this to the attention of the committee as well as Canadians. If we had universal support on this issue, this might not be necessary. But there is dissenting opinion. There is fractured opinion in this country on this issue. And as such, I think we have a serious obligation and a responsibility, not only to present the arguments for and against, but to present every opportunity we have to the Canadian population.

It will do two things. Hopefully, it will make our public more aware, more informed. Secondly, it will present Parliament with possibly more and/or additional information so that we can make a committee recommendation. I do think the Manley report goes directly to government. But this committee has a responsibility to put a report forward. Whether it is unanimous or whether it is a dissenting opinion, I do think it is important that it comes before Parliament.

To not take advantage of an opportunity to do this, I think honestly, is a complete abdication of our responsibility as a committee. I believe we should move forward with this, and I would wholeheartedly support this motion.

• (1725)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kramp.

I have Mr. Chan and then Mr. Dewar.

I will note that the bells were ringing and now have stopped. I didn't think there was supposed to be a vote today.

Continue, Mr. Chan.

Hon. Raymond Chan: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, with due respect to what the government side has been saying about the importance of this report and so on, I have problems with the whole notion of the process by which the government is coming to its decision after just looking at the Manley report. To me, the Prime Minister has appointed a group of elitists, a group of five people, who he thinks is knowledgeable on those matters, and he has ignored the input or the feelings of Canadians at large.

As Mr. Kramp and Mr. Obhrai have said, all Canadians are very concerned about the Afghanistan issue. I don't think the government or Parliament should make any decisions without going to the people. I also echo Madame Barbot; it is amazing this panel ignored consulting Parliament, people in this committee, for input before they made their conclusions in their report. Further, the government, without consulting Parliament and without consulting the foreign affairs committee, has made a decision on the government's position and on government policy on how to proceed. The Prime Minister and the cabinet—whether he consults the cabinet or not, I don't know, but the Prime Minister has come out and said this is what we're going to do. This has shown contempt for the parliamentary process, for the people.

I respect the Manley report. There is something in it, but it is a product of five people out of a country of 33 million people, and there is no democratic input from grassroots Canadians. To me, the responsibility that was put on our shoulders to represent the people of Canada is to come up with some policy recommendations to the government, with the Manley report as part of the input. I would weigh the importance of the Manley report just as heavily as the evidence of the witnesses we are going to see in the days to come and other representations we may have.

● (1730)

The Chair: Mr. Dewar, then Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I was hoping we could just call the question, in light of the fact that it's 5:30. If the government wanted to have the opinion of the House on what it thinks of the Manley report, the government could bring forward a motion on any given day. If they want to do that, they can. Let's just call the question and vote on it.

The Chair: We have a speaking list here, so we'll get through it.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: In response to Mr. Chan's question and in response to Paul Dewar's question and everybody's question, the simple fact of the matter is that this is an independent committee of the Parliament of Canada, not the Government of Canada. You are not responding to the Government of Canada. This committee is doing a report on Afghanistan that will be presented to Parliament as independent. And now within exactly the argument that you are making is what the argument is, that we are calling the panel here as part of all the other witnesses.

You can say very clearly what you just said in the report when you are listening to the panel, by putting your own argument in this thing by saying, "I don't agree with you". But this is exactly the debate we are talking about. And the debate on Afghanistan is that we undertook in this committee to study Afghanistan. Now, as part of that report of the dialogue on the Afghanistan issue, here is one portion out there that will come and tell us...as you have put forward committee people for evidence, from all sides of things here.

What is wrong? I don't even understand what is wrong, why we cannot bring one panel here to listen to their point of view for a comprehensive report. The defence committee was not doing it; they cancelled it.

But, Mr. Chan, you must understand that this is an independent panel to study this report. Look, we have put forward minority

reports. You put forward a minority report. You put forward dissenting opinions. Now you have this thing out here and you are getting afraid.

Let me put it to you point-blank, Mr. Chan. Are you afraid of the Manley report? Then why are you not listening to it?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

I just want to say this, because the question has come, why didn't Manley come here? With all due respect to Mr. Manley, in the middle of a report, he would come and do what? To question us or to come and have us question him? What I would imagine Mr. Manley would believe is that he would finish his report, would come to the conclusions of his report, and then would be willing to be questioned on that report.

Let me say one other thing. If you recall, our committee was oh so anxious to finish our report so that Manley would have our report to reference in the building of his report. We said, all different people said, that he can reference our evidence at any time. He can go to the website. Our evidence is there. He may well have done that. But as anxious as we were to hear from Manley, we didn't even finish our report.

Wait a minute. That's an aside. That was for free.

Mr. Patry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you.

[*English*]

Deepak, you called me and I told that any time you'd like to have, as in the first paragraph of your motion, the Ministers of National Defence, Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, government witnesses, any witnesses, to tell us what they want to do with the Manley report, how they will tackle the Manley report for the future of this country—I agreed with this. But the Manley report is a government report, and I'm not willing to have Mr. Manley come here and tell us what I could have read, because I read it from one page to the other in the airplane. And if the defence committee didn't want it.... Why did the defence committee not want to see the report of Mr. Manley? It concerns Defence more than Foreign Affairs, and they say they're not interested. It's up to us, and I don't think we should have Mr. Manley on the independent panel. Any ministers are always more than welcome here in our committee.

● (1735)

The Chair: Mr. Chan, you know what, I'm going to—

Hon. Raymond Chan: I have to set the record straight, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I don't know if you do. You've been on here three times already. You set the record straight; then he sets the record straight.

Hon. Raymond Chan: No. He's putting words into my mouth.

The Chair: No, he's not.

Hon. Raymond Chan: When did I say I don't want Mr. Manley to come? Check the record. I never said that.

The Chair: Well, we'll check the record, because you said some interesting things.

Madame Boucher.

Mr. Chan: I criticized the report; I never said he shouldn't come.

The Chair: Now we're going to calm down so that Madame Boucher can speak. She'll be the last speaker on this.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I would like to come back to what Mr. Chan said, when he spoke of all the Canadians who had not been seen or heard. Did you not feel like going to visit the military bases and going to meet the soldiers, the ones who voluntarily sign up to

go to Afghanistan? Did you not feel like meeting these people who are fighting over there for the sake of freedom? Come to Quebec City and go to see the 22nd Regiment, go to Valcartier.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: You have to go to Kandahar.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have no objections, I am ready to go to Kandahar, but I am trying to explain...

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. All those in favour of Mr. Obhrai's motion as amended?

(Motion negatived)

The Chair: Seeing that the clock is 5:35 p.m., we are now going to adjourn.

Thank you, committee.

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