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—
Chair

Mr. Lee Richardson

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• (1005)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC)): Order. I think we're ready to go.

Appearing from the Embassy of the Republic of Peru, I'm very pleased to welcome His Excellency Ambassador Jorge Castañeda. Thank you for returning and being with us.

We also have the deputy head of mission, Pedro Builtrón, and Minister Librado Orozco Zapata visiting us today.

I am going to ask His Excellency to give a brief opening statement, which will be followed by questions. In the interests of time and of the committee, we're going to stick pretty carefully to our time limit.

Ambassador, please begin.

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Ambassador of the Republic of Peru to Canada, Embassy of the Republic of Peru): Mr. Chairman, members of the standing committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak on the events that took place in Bagua, Peru, on June 5 and 6 that caused the death of 24 policemen and 10 civilians. This is in connection to the concern of the standing committee on the said events.

At the outset, allow me to present a clear and concise explanation of the background of the events together with the actions my government is implementing in order to restore peace and the rule of law in the region affected by this recent surge of violence, as well as to address the concerns and aspirations of our fellow countrymen in the Amazon region.

The background is that, at the end of June 2008, the government enacted legislative decree 1090, a forest and wildlife law, under special powers provided by Congress. This law met the opposition of the native inhabitants of the Amazonian region. After a negotiation process in which the mentioned native people were represented by the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Rainforest—AIDSESEP, for its acronym in Spanish—the Peruvian Congress approved law 29317 in January 2009. This reflected the proposal presented by AIDSESEP and the views of other organizations in order to modify legislative decree 1090.

Nevertheless, AIDSESEP continued to demand the repeal of legislative decree 1090 and law 29317. Initially, this organization asked Congress for a repealing of those laws. At the same time, AIDSESEP started a series of demonstrations in different zones of the

country, including the province of Bagua, interrupting the provision of basic services as well as food transportation to and from that area.

On May 20, 2009, the government established a multi-sector standing committee, chaired by the president of the cabinet ministers, and comprising nine ministers, seven representatives of AIDSESEP, and three other members of civil organizations. The multi-sector standing committee, which was installed on May 26, could only hold two sessions, since the process was interrupted on June 1, when the representatives of AIDSESEP decided to withdraw from the dialogue.

Without waiting for a solution to their demands under the legal procedure, which was running in parallel, AIDSESEP radicalized its demonstrations. This compelled the government to declare the state of emergency in early May. However, it was not until June 5, when the situation worsened, that the national police were given instructions to take measures in order to restore public order and guarantee the safety of the population of Bagua. By this time the seizing of roads, public services, and private installations had entered its 55th day.

My government rejects the allegations that it has used force in a disproportionate way, causing a high number of injured and dead among the civilian population. It also denies that there have been human rights violations. The majority of casualties, as I have mentioned, were agents of the national police, who received orders to act with extreme tolerance toward the protesters. The Peruvian forces, as is usual in any democratic state, have behaved in accordance with international standards of respect of human rights.

In the wake of the events of Bagua, the public prosecutor's office of Peru has initiated a thorough investigation in order to establish responsibilities with due respect to the citizens' rights embodied in the Peruvian Constitution and with due observance of the rule of law as it is characteristic of a democracy.

• (1010)

As an expression of openness and good faith, the Government of Peru requested the participation of the Catholic and evangelical churches so that they could contribute to finding new avenues of dialogue with the native population. The Government of Peru believes that dialogue is the only path for addressing the concerns of the indigenous people.

The Peruvian Parliament has also responded constructively in order to enforce peace, confidence, and harmony in the Amazon region. Thus, Congress has suspended the application of legislative decree 1090 to allow for its full review. By the same token, the multi-sector standing committee has been broadened to enhance representation of the indigenous communities, with 10 representatives out of 19.

Yesterday the Peruvian executive announced that the draft to repeal legislative decree 1090 would be presented in Congress before June 18. That's tomorrow. This proposal was put forward by the President of the Cabinet Ministers, Yehude Simon, and the Minister of the Environment, Antonio Brack. They are currently in the Amazon region engaged in talks and dialogue with the native communities to find a lasting solution to their claims and to address their concerns regarding legislation aimed at preserving their rights on the land.

As a result of the above-mentioned talks, an act of understanding has been signed with the representatives of the central Amazon region. The government has assumed the commitment to repeal legislative decrees 1090 and 1064. The state of emergency in the Amazon region will be lifted once the roadblock of the Fernando Belaúnde Highway is ended.

The United Nations special rapporteur on the situation of human rights and the fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Professor James Anaya, has accepted an invitation from the Government of Peru to visit the country. He will be in Peru between today and June 19. This is another expression of goodwill and the engagement of the Peruvian authorities with the international community in aiming to promote respect for the human rights of indigenous people.

In another positive development, yesterday the Peruvian Congress approved unanimously the creation of a multi-party commission charged with inquiring into the events in Bagua within 120 days. Congress's Speaker, Mr. Javier Velásquez Quesquén, has announced that on Thursday the legislature will decide on the five members of the commission, which will integrate congressmen of both the government party and the opposition.

Members of the standing committee, one cannot deny that the problems of our indigenous people in the Americas, including Canada, have their roots in centuries of misunderstanding. It is documented that in the past, native Americans across the continent were subject to abuses and were deprived of their basic human rights. This has caused a tragedy for our continent. Peru is one of the more ethnically diverse countries in the hemisphere. Therefore, it is in our interest to respect the rights of all our communities, particularly the indigenous people who inhabited our territory even before the arrival of Europeans.

As a sign of our commitment on this issue, the Peruvian state has subscribed to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Fortunately, today we and all Peruvians have a better awareness of the need to preserve the rights of our native communities. At the same time, we have to take into account the needs of all 28 million Peruvians who are eager to have suitable conditions for sustainable development, for preserving our environment, and for decreasing poverty.

●(1015)

It is worth mentioning that the above philosophy is enshrined in the free trade agreement Canada approved. As expressed by Mrs. Carol Nelder-Corvari, chief negotiator for Canada, in her opening statement before this committee, "This free trade agreement also includes new provisions on trade-related cooperation and commitments to support corporate social responsibility and prevent corruption."

This commitment complements Canada's broader efforts, which include cooperation in helping local communities to get a better grasp of the risks and opportunities of extractive industries, thereby helping to mitigate social conflict. In short, the implementation of a free trade agreement will be a significant contribution from Canada. It will help the Peruvian democratic authorities to improve governance related to sustainable development of the lands by indigenous people. Canada maintains a constructive approach towards an inherent problem. The sooner we start to implement the free trade agreement, the sooner we will be able to put into practice projects that benefit the Peruvian people as a whole and our indigenous communities in particular.

Finally, though the events of last June 5 and June 6 led to the tragic deaths of fellow Peruvians, the claims that put the death toll in numbers significantly higher are groundless and unacceptable. To counter irresponsible speculation, it is important to bear in mind that Peru's ombudsman, the prosecutor's office, and the Red Cross, all institutions widely respected in the country and abroad, have put the death toll at 34—24 policemen and 10 civilians. The Peruvian police lost a disproportionate number of agents. Therefore, no reliable data support the claim that the Peruvian police participated in human rights abuses. The Peruvian government deeply regrets the loss of life of our fellow countrymen, which the nation mourns.

As for respect for human rights and the defence of democracy, values that Peru and Canada share in the hemisphere, we have to be clear in stating that there is no justification whatsoever for attacking or, even worse, killing a policeman. No state, not even the most liberal democracy in the world, could tolerate the abhorrent violation of human rights that resulted in the deaths of seven servicemen charged with preserving the rule of law. A strong respect for democracy in the Americas cannot be viable without due consideration of its police.

I call upon the distinguished Canadian members of Parliament to analyze with objectivity the events that took place in my country. The empirical evidence shows unequivocally that this is the worst disaster the Peruvian police have ever suffered. There is no record in Peru's history of a similar event in which so many defenders of the law lost their lives, some of them even suffering terrible torture and humiliation before being slaughtered in cold blood by the crowd.

Thank you.

●(1020)

The Chair: Thank you, Ambassador. That was very compelling.

I wish to relay on behalf of the committee our condolences in remembering the lives that were lost in this tragic event.

It's a broader issue for the committee, and we want to pursue questions.

Mr. Brison.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador.

Thanks to all of you for being here today.

The fact that we're having discussions on a free trade agreement that give us the capacity to discuss these rights issues and aboriginal and indigenous peoples' rights issues I think bears out the thesis that in fact economic engagement does help to increase and strengthen human rights engagement. But for that to be the case, we need answers and to understand the incident and the broader issue much better than we do now.

With foreign direct investment, and investors investing in oil, forestry, or other industries, there are allegations that governments have been slow to settle the Indian land claim and title issue, and a lot faster to grant concessions to the oil companies and the loggers. I'd like some indication from you, and a report from you, as to the progress around land claims issues with your indigenous peoples, and a comparing of the rate of settlement on land claims for indigenous peoples with concessions to investors, the extraction sector, and the oil companies.

I think it would be very helpful for us to have some better clarity around that. We in our own country of Canada have challenges around aboriginal land claims settlement. We have taken far too long in addressing these issues respectfully.

I guess the concern we have is that as much as many of us believe that economic engagement strengthens human rights engagement, we don't want to see economic engagement in some way create further delays in land claims settlement for aboriginal people or in some way compromise their rights, sacrificing them largely because of the economic pressures created by trade. We want to make sure that trade can be and continues to be a capacity builder economically, socially, and on rights, on aboriginal and labour rights and these other issues.

Would you be able to provide us with a progress report around aboriginal and indigenous peoples' land claims and also give us a better understanding of how the system is working in Peru?

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): If you'll allow me, I'd like to answer in Spanish.

First of all, I'd like to express my gratitude for the question that was asked by the MP.

We also share the same concern in that free trade agreements should be a tool for the development of the country, while maintaining the environment and the cultural identity and rights of our indigenous communities.

Obviously, the events that occurred in Peru, in keeping with what I pointed out in the background information, were not a result of a situation that exists only now. This goes back a long time. When the government established legislative decree 1070, it did so with a view

to providing a legal framework for ownership of lands in indigenous communities vis-à-vis the need to develop the natural resources that exist in the country.

I would like you to bear in mind that Peru is a country of 1,280,000 square kilometres, of which 60% is in the Amazon. This 60% is populated by 10% of the population of 28 million inhabitants. Of this 10%, only a minority are native; the rest are not native people. Decree 1070 reserved ownership of up to 12 million hectares for the communities and another 15 million hectares as natural reserves.

What has occurred is a lack of communication or a lack of understanding between the natives and the authorities who negotiated the adoption of this decree. Unfortunately, this poor communication led to the events that occurred on June 5, and all Peruvians have lamented that this has occurred. And we have learned from this situation, so much so that the government first of all has suspended the standard that gave rise to this, and now Congress is repealing it in order to start again with an expansion of indigenous communities and the dialogue with them in order to identify the controversial points, find a solution to them, and come up with an act that will cover the expectations of those living in the Peruvian Amazon and their rights of ownership.

• (1025)

The Chair: Thank you. That was seven minutes exactly. Well done. I hope we can continue that.

Monsieur Cardin, vous disposez de sept minutes, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentlemen. It's a pleasure to have you here. I noted your great qualities as diplomats attacking head on, of course, a problem about which we have all been recently made aware.

Indeed, for us, from the outside, this is a major concern. Let's say it immediately, we don't look at the free trade agreement with Peru as we look at the one with Colombia. There is indeed a major gap with regard to human rights.

As you know, the Bloc Québécois is of course in favour of protecting the respective sovereignty of countries since we're trying to acquire our own in Quebec. In that sense, I am still convinced that free trade agreements must ensure that both parties come out winners.

There is one factor among so many others that concerns the Bloc Québécois the most, and another party as well. It is the agreement on investment, which we call Chapter 11—in reference to the agreement with the United States. That agreement, at one point, gives businesses more power than is held by the populations of the countries concerned. Businesses can sue the government for a shortfall relative to current and even future profits—those that are anticipated.

In this context, and from the standpoint of the environment or working conditions, a business can be set up in your country and perhaps take advantage of environmental laws that are less strict and, perhaps as well, take advantage of the fact that wages are lower—even though there might be some improvement in that regard. As members of a sovereign country, should you wish to work to improve those rights and working conditions as well as the environment, you would then no longer be able to do so because the investment agreement gives foreign companies too much power.

Ultimately, my colleague, another party and myself are opposed to this agreement in order to protect your sovereignty and your population so that, one day or another, we can arrive at a fair trade arrangement.

What is your perception of this investment agreement, with regard to your rights and your sovereignty as such?

• (1030)

[English]

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): Thank you very much for your intervention.

I'd like to point out that as in NAFTA, where Canada and the United States have a free trade agreement that clause 11 is part of, if there's an international reality in the business sector it's not just the question of the will of a state that prevails in the world economy; therefore in all negotiations there are always concessions.

In the case of the free trade agreement between Peru and Canada, it's not the first free trade agreement that Peru has signed. It did so beforehand with the United States, and just did so with China. Negotiations are under way with the European Union, Japan, and Korea. Therefore we have to adjust to the international investment realities. We cannot simply say no and refuse the possibility of developing a free trade agreement that contains many beneficial aspects for development of the country.

We are a country that is very rich in natural resources, but we need infrastructure and investments. As a result, we need these free trade agreements as a tool to develop the country. Our internal market is small, and developing an internal market takes many years. You need to have well-being, and in order to have well-being you need to have production, and for production you need capital. So we are convinced that the free trade agreement we have signed with Canada will be beneficial for both countries.

It assures us that within Peruvian legislation investments will take place in our territory to exploit natural resources while protecting the environment and respecting our community values and rights of ownership of our native people. The conditions will allow us, over a given period of time, to decrease the level of poverty, which is still very high.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cardin: I'm going back to the environmental aspect because we're talking about mining, oil, gas and also probably logging companies. As regards climate change, and so on, in the southern hemisphere, in South America, you are dealing with an additional responsibility. As the Amazon basin covers nearly 60% of the area of your country, that's an additional responsibility that falls to you or that is virtually even imposed on you.

If you had to compare your environmental protection laws with Canada's environmental laws—you must have compared them—how would you rate Peru with regard to environmental protection?

[English]

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): In the past few years we have made tremendous progress in protecting the environment in Peru. With the creation of the ministry of the environment last year we now have a Department of the Environment and different sectors. The acronym is PAMA, and they are environmental support programs. These are diagnostic tools we use before any investment.

You were talking about the forestry sector. Despite the fact that we have a large land mass in Peru, we produce very little in the forestry industry, unlike what you do in Asia or other areas of South America. The environment is well protected. We have standards in the mining sector that are fairly high. In the case of Canadian companies that come to Peru, I'd like to point out that there have not been any further complaints by local populations regarding the operations of these companies, because there was a corporate social responsibility law that allowed us to improve things over time.

Peru is in the process of improving its protection of the environment in all senses of the word. Our environmental standards are going through an ongoing review, and all sectors of activity are paying careful attention to not worsen their effect on the environment, especially when it comes to development and the state of the country in general.

Thank you.

• (1035)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cardin.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cardin: Do I have a little time left, Mr. Chairman?

[English]

The Chair: No. That was eight and a half minutes.

Mr. Julian, maybe you can get us back on time and keep it to seven minutes.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Chair, there's faint hope of that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador, for being here today.

I think all of us around the table express our profound condolences to the Peruvian people for the lives that have been lost—police officers, civilians, and their families. It is a tragic situation.

My party has raised concerns about the impacts of these so-called free trade agreements. I think there are very clear issues here about how the U.S.-Peruvian agreement can be properly constituted to ensure that indigenous people, aboriginal people, are included in the kind of economic development all of us around the table want to see.

You mentioned that the suspension has taken place on legislative decree 1090. I believe for legislative decree 1064 there was a suspension as well, and 1080 was the other decree that raised concerns. You may want to qualify that third decree. If they are repealed, which will allow for negotiation and reconciliation with indigenous people, will that mean the U.S.-Peru agreement cannot be implemented as the President of Peru set out?

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): Thank you very much for your question.

With regard to the Peru-U.S. free trade agreement, it is already in force. Obviously the matter of 1090 and 1064—these have been suspended. Tomorrow there will be full derogation. We have talked with the American government about this situation, and the American government has been very understanding.

We want a certain amount of time to occur so that the commission, which is made up of 19 members, four of which are representatives of the government, five are the heads of the Amazon regional areas, and ten are representatives of the rural communities.... We want them to provide the pertinent recommendations, and then based on these recommendations we will put forward a new law that will take into account the concerns of the native communities and will protect their rights. So the reconciliation process, as you call it, is already under way. It is simply a matter of time—the time required to resolve the issue.

I would also like to note that in prior conversation, the representatives of the different rural ethnic groups were represented by one entity. While it was sizeable, it did not represent all native groups. It was called AIDSESEP. When the government decided to increase dialogue, we wanted to include other ethnic groups that were not members of AIDSESEP, so now there will be ten members, and AIDSESEP will not represent the majority.

As I said, Peru is a very big country, and the native people of the south are not necessarily the same as the aboriginal people of the Amazon area or the northern area. Their needs may be different. They may have common interests, but they may have specific interests. So the idea is that this dialogue include representation by all groups, by all native communities in Peru.

• (1040)

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you for that.

I'd like to move on to the chapter 11 provisions that are in the Canada-Peru agreement.

There have been broad concerns about the impacts of so-called free trade agreements. Certainly with NAFTA, we've seen a meltdown of the Mexican rural economy. In fact, in a very real sense, many people are poorer after the passing of free trade agreements than are richer. That's unfortunately the factual evidence of what the impacts have been. We very carefully study the impacts of agreements, and we've seen what has happened in NAFTA—a

lowering of real income, actually in all three countries, in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Most people in North America are earning less. What has happened is a consolidation of wealth in very few hands. In a very real sense, free trade agreements give too much power in too few hands. The idea that there is a trickle-down economic development simply is not proven, when we look at the facts.

The issue of chapter 11 and of the additional powers it provides to Canadian companies operating abroad that can override local indigenous people or local municipalities is a very important one. My question is, since Canada has done no impact study on what the chapter 11 provisions would mean for indigenous Peruvians, has the Peruvian government done an impact study into what the impacts of the Canada-Peru free trade agreement could be? We've seen an explosion around the U.S.-Peru agreement and the decrees coming out of that. I don't think any Canadian outside of Parliament Hill would want to see the Canada-Peru deal ignite a similar level of protest. Has the Peruvian government looked into what the impacts are of providing these supranational powers to Canadian companies through the chapter 11 provisions of Canada-Peru?

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): Thank you very much for your question.

I'd like to point out that for an emerging country such as Peru, the idea of having an economic policy is based on reducing systemic poverty that exists in the country. Since 1992 we have begun a new policy of free trade in Peru and we have sustained this through different governments. We feel that over the years the level of poverty in Peru is declining significantly. When this government came to power the levels of poverty were at 42% and the levels of extreme poverty were at 22%. Poverty is declining. Today it is at 38% and extreme poverty is at roughly 18%. This is to say there has been a decline in poverty through our policy of free trade.

Now, with regard to the specific issues of investments, there has not been an impact study on the free trade agreement with Canada. But I'd like to say that free trade with Canada will happen after our signature of the agreement with the U.S. It is a mirror to this agreement, but it's not necessarily the same agreement. What I mean to say is, we feel that Canada didn't get the same advantages as the U.S. got in its free trade agreement with the U.S. through the most favoured nation clause or through the different taxes or tariff clauses. The reality of our markets are different, and the U.S. is a majority partner in trade with Peru—about a third of our trade is with them—whereas Canada is a minority stakeholder, a minority trade partner for Peru. So this had an effect on the various advantages of the agreement. With Canada there has not been an impact study, but in the case of the U.S. it did get done.

• (1045)

The Chair: Excuse me, Peter. We're going to have to move on.

Mr. Keddy.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to our witnesses. Your Excellency, I appreciate your coming here today.

I as well would like to certainly extend our condolences to the police officers, to the aboriginal people, to everyone who lost their lives in this unfortunate incident. I appreciate your candour in coming here today to discuss it.

I have a couple of issues and questions.

It's my understanding that the way the Canada-Peru free trade agreement works on human rights and on the environment, the way the agreement is written, Peru cannot sign an agreement that actually denigrates or takes away from environmental protection or makes it weaker, or takes away from labour rights or human rights. I'd like you to enlarge upon that a little bit.

I'd also like you to explain maybe for the committee how you're attempting to mediate the conflict now, how you can bring both sides back together. I think your Peruvian government has been very proactive in attempting to bring both sides of this conflict together, to bring them to the table and try to get beyond this terrible incident and position that you're in now.

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): Thank you.

As you have so rightly pointed out, there are two side agreements to the FTA. One is to protect the environment and the other one has to do with labour cooperation. We have to take into account those issues when it comes to the development of the country. You also have to take into account the human rights needs and the labour issues of the local population. In that sense, we believe that those agreements, which are part of the FTA but are side agreements, are binding, and as a result we must comply with them exactly, like the Canadian part.

In terms of the dialogue, as I said, our government focused on mediation through the evangelical and Catholic churches in order to promote dialogue. I'd like to point out that the evangelical churches and the Catholic churches have a lot of influence among indigenous populations, because quite often they provide social assistance through schools or medical assistance to those populations, so they have a lot of influence over these rural populations. In Peru we have a defender of the people, if you will—essentially a Peruvian ombudsman—who is actively involved in this work right now.

Yesterday a memorandum of understanding was signed between the President of the Council of Ministers and the native communities of the centre. We have two points on which we agreed. I will leave you with a binder with the memorandum of understanding that was signed yesterday. I'll also leave you with the names of all the people who died, the people who were injured and where they're being treated in hospitals, the people who have been detained and where they have been detained, the people who have gone back to their place of origin, and the people who have been kept with the religious communities. We'd simply like to show that the Peruvian state fully respects human rights.

Unfortunately, we saw the events of June 5 and 6, as I said in my initial intervention. We've learned from this, and we want to produce a law that will protect the people of the Amazon area. But at the same time, as I said, it's also important to take into account the rights of the 20 million Peruvians who don't all live in the Amazon region.

• (1050)

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I appreciate that, and I think Mr. Brison mentioned in his question that the settling of aboriginal people and indigenous land rights takes time. We're still attempting to complete that here in Canada.

I find it a bit incongruous when I hear some of my colleagues talk about the increase in jobs and increase in opportunity for the Peruvian people since you started to trade with other nations on a world scale—not that you weren't trading before, but signing free trade agreements. Your poverty rate has gone down. Your worst poverty rate has gone down an equal amount. I certainly believe that jobs and opportunity improve human rights. It doesn't take away from human rights. Any time there are more jobs and more opportunity, people will demand greater human rights.

Certainly we're always concerned with Canadian companies working abroad. There are a number of Canadian companies. We're world leaders in the extractive sector. In your experience and Peru's experience in dealing with Canadian companies, can you tell us a little about their corporate social responsibility practices and how they've been able to interact not just with the Peruvian government but with the Peruvian people?

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): Thank you very much.

In terms of corporate social responsibility, or CSR, I'd simply like to point out that essentially, Canadian companies in the extraction sectors are found mainly in the mining sector, and to a lesser extent in the oil sector. Canada, through CIDA, has a support program, and one of its major parts has to do with corporate social responsibility. There is a cooperation framework between Canada and Peru as part of bilateral trade that takes into account corporate social responsibility.

As I said, with regard to native communities and Canadian companies—and this is different from what may happen elsewhere in South America—there have not been any further substantial questions regarding the presence of Canadian extraction companies. Or at least there haven't been any roadblocks, there haven't been any demands affecting companies, or anything that has interfered with production. In the case of Peru and Canada, we haven't had those problems. It may have happened with companies from other countries, but in the case of Canada, there have not been problems.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Keddy.

As I look at the clock, I think it's unlikely that we would finish a second round of questioning. So rather than allowing one or two members to speak in a second round—I think everyone's had an opportunity to speak—and rather than pursuing a second round of questioning, I'm going to ask the vice-chairman to conclude by thanking our guests. Then I will perhaps ask Your Excellency to respond briefly to Mr. Cannis, and that will conclude the testimony.

Mr. Cannis.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity.

Your Excellency, I'll add my voice to the condolences of everybody else as well.

I want to thank you for coming before our committee and being so candid. I know that the questions asked are sometimes not easy, but they are for the benefit of all, and you've been very forthcoming. I want to say thank you for coming before our committee and making us aware, and for making yourself available, actually, at any time to all of us, as far as I know.

Thank you.

• (1055)

His Excellency Jorge Juan Castañeda Mendez (Interpretation): I'd like to thank you for this meeting. I think it's been a very important chance for Canadian parliamentarians to receive a representative from Peru who would put forward a very objective perspective on what happened in Peru.

Unfortunately, these events have occurred at a time when the Canadian Senate is in the process of approving the Canada-Peru FTA Implementation Act. I hope the process will not be slowed down or interrupted by these events, and so I would ask the committee, if it

believes that this is important, that what we have said here be passed on to the Senate committee on international trade in order that it be informed. If they invite me, I could assist them there, but it's just so that they be made aware of what has gone on in Peru.

Unfortunately, what is published in the media is not necessarily the truth. In fact, the *Globe and Mail* from Friday stated that in fact it was Peru's Tiananmen Square. I believe it is an exaggeration to compare Peru with Tiananmen Square, because the majority of our deaths were of police officers, and there was no genocide.

I sent a letter to them, which was not published, and I don't believe it will be, but we simply wanted to put forward the information. I believe that we need factual-based information, because the most important thing is to talk about the facts and not about any hypotheses.

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you, and I thank you for all your questions. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you again, Your Excellency. We very much appreciate your courtesy in coming today.

With that, gentlemen, I think we will conclude this meeting. Because I didn't have an overwhelming request for something on Thursday, I think we will adjourn until the fall, presuming that the House rises.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin: Perhaps until the new legislation!

[*English*]

The Chair: Thanks again for a great day and a good session.

We're adjourned.

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