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Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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Wednesday, November 17, 2004

•(1535)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are conducting a study of international policy respecting the United Nations Reform. It is a pleasure for us to have as witnesses today, from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ferry de Kerckhove, Director General, International Organizations Bureau, and Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Director General, Global Issues Bureau. Welcome. It's a pleasure to welcome you among us this afternoon.

The floor is yours, Mr. de Kerckhove.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove (Director General, International Organizations Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I was going to say “ladies and gentlemen parliamentarians”, but I unfortunately see no ladies.

It is an honour for me, and for my colleague Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, to appear before you to review, on the one hand, the importance of the United Nations Reform, and on the other, The Responsibility to Protect, a largely Canadian initiative which is intrinsically linked to the reform of the manner in which the UN approaches and executes its role.

I would like to begin by recalling the origin of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change—the French translation of which is not yet very clear—whose report, scheduled for release at the beginning of December, is already generating considerable interest, which is a very good sign. Your own interest is evidence of that.

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has had to face profound changes on the international scene. The number of independent states has more than tripled. The Cold War has receded. The nature of challenges has changed. The number of internal conflicts has surpassed that of inter-state conflicts and more and more frequently, risks to humanity are global: terrorism, Aids, pandemics, damage to the environment, genocide, human rights violations.

[*English*]

All these factors convinced the Secretary General of the United Nations that the time was right for a comprehensive review and reform of the manner in which the organization discharges its responsibilities, including in the area of collective security.

In November 2003, Kofi Annan, the Secretary General, appointed 16 eminent personalities to serve on a high-level panel on threats, challenges,

and change, with a mandate to: a) Examine today's global threats and provide an analysis of future challenges to international peace and security. ...

b) Identify clearly the contribution that collective action can make in addressing these challenges.

c) Recommend the changes necessary to ensure effective collective action, including but not limited to a review of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The terms of reference further note that the aim of the high-level panel is to recommend practical measures to ensure effective collective action and that the panel is not asked to formulate policies on specific issues, nor on the UN's role in specific places.

The panel is due to report in early December, and it is expected that its recommendations will form the core of a comprehensive reform package that the Secretary General of the United Nations hopes will be adopted at the summit marking the 60th anniversary of the United Nations in September of 2005.

In carrying out its work, the panel did conduct hearings on specific issues, but member states were not specifically consulted or invited to submit their views. Canada nevertheless made two submissions to the panel that have been distributed and are available on the Internet at the site indicated in your paper. The first is a thematic non-paper on the responsibility to protect. The other contains recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of the UN system in the areas of counterterrorism, health, environmental degradation, failed and failing states, and inter-organization coordination.

We have yet to see the recommendations of the panel, but we have had extensive contact with its secretariat and its members. On the margin of their visit to New York for the General Assembly, the Prime Minister and Minister Pettigrew had extensive consultations with the panel members. Our ambassador at the UN, Allan Rock, and senior members of our mission in New York have been in regular contact with the panel. Based on these contacts, they are confident that the panel will come up with a credible set of recommendations to strengthen the international community's response to global threats, both new and traditional, and present a comprehensive package that Canada should be able to support.

We understand that the panel has been taking an integrated approach to security. It has resisted establishing a hierarchy of threats. Rather, it has recognized that threats to security are perceived differently by different countries—for instance, terrorism may be seen as much less of a threat than desperate poverty or HIV/AIDS by certain developing countries—and that threats reinforce one another. Therefore, the panel proposed that they be addressed as a complex, and it advocates policies that work across threats. Social and economic threats such as poverty, environmental degradation, infectious disease, and newer threats such as transnational organized crime and terrorism, are identified as elements of this complex of threats. This parallels the approach Canada has taken in its omnibus submission to the panel that I referred to earlier.

The approach recommended by the panel will, we have been told, put emphasis on prevention and proposed strategies for dealing with the clusters of threats that it has identified. We have not seen the details of these recommendations, of course, but we have good reason to believe the panel has been thinking in a direction that parallels our own thinking.

It is obvious that at the core of an active collective security approach, one must find a proactive Security Council. The panel has looked at the issue of the use of force, and again we have been told that its report will contain a strong reference to the core concept of the responsibility to protect. That is, states have a responsibility to protect populations under their control, and when they fail to exercise that responsibility, the international community must take over.

• (1540)

A lot has been said and written about what the panel's report may have to say about structural reform of the council and expansion of its membership. There has been reference to a possible proposal for an additional tier of non-permanent members that might be elected for longer, renewable terms. As you know, the current term of non-permanent members of the Security Council is two years, non-renewable.

Canada has taken the position that it serves no purpose at this time to comment on putative proposals. We prefer to wait until the report has been released before adopting a public position on the issue. This being said, Canada's own position is that we do not think increasing the number of permanent seats on the council will increase its effectiveness, which must be the primary objective.

There is also no place for more vetoes. In fact, there are already five too many vetoes, from our perspective.

Canada has been a key contributor over the years to the United Nations, and has invested a lot in ensuring that multilateral, rules-based solutions are found to international problems. Canada intends to ensure that we are in a position to continue to exercise that role, notably through our regular membership on the Security Council.

Let me now say a few words of the posture Canada expects to take with respect to the report of the panel when it is released. We view the panel as one of the most significant efforts to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in the field of international peace and security in years. Canada has been very supportive of the organization's efforts, and we will continue to be. As indicated

earlier, we expect the recommendations of the panel to be largely consistent with Canadian policy, and we will therefore be actively engaged in New York, in capitals, at official and political levels, to ensure its adoption by the 2005 summit.

This said, peace and security are only one of the sectors of activity of the United Nations, and a truly comprehensive reform package will need to include recommendations to strengthen the capacity of the UN and its members in the economic and social sectors as well. Recommendations to accelerate progress toward the achievement of the millennium development goals and better implementation of the Monterrey consensus will have to be part of the reform package to be adopted in 2005.

As you see, we are at the crossroads. The world needs a renewed United Nations.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Either the member states of the UN gather the courage to contribute to the reform of the institution, or its usefulness will diminish, and our capacity to act collectively on a multilateral level will be undermined. I could say a few words later on the UN report on civil society. However, in view of the time allowed me, I prefer for the moment to leave the floor to my colleague, Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, who will tell you about The Responsibility to Protect. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. de Kerckhove.

Ms. Gervais-Vidricaire, please.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire (Director General, Global Issues Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen parliamentarians, as you know, the protection of civilians is among the highest foreign policy priorities of the Canadian government, and we are very much at the forefront of this discussion on the international stage. The most challenging part of the protection agenda is what to do in the case of internal war, a type of conflict that often pits fundamental principles of sovereignty and non-intervention directly against humanitarian obligations.

The report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, entitled *The Responsibility to Protect*, addresses this issue head-on, and we believe it provides an excellent framework for determining the circumstances that warrant intervention on humanitarian grounds. I would like to say a few words about our ongoing work in this area, the content of the report itself, and Canadian follow-up efforts.

But first let me say that, although there remain significant challenges to advancing this discussion internationally, it is a debate we cannot afford to ignore. The ongoing crisis in Darfur is a chilling reminder of the vulnerability of ordinary people in the contemporary security environment. Providing for their safety is not a marginal issue on the international peace and security agenda — indeed, it goes to the very heart of UN Reform, as my colleague Ferry de Kerckhove mentioned.

[English]

Canadian efforts to promote civilian protection are taking place against the backdrop of a changing security environment, particularly the rise of internal war as a proportion of all violent conflict. This trend resulted in a series of devastating humanitarian crises throughout the 1990s, including Somalia, Srebrenica, Rwanda, Zaire, and Kosovo. Sadly, the international community's response to such crises was and continues to be inconsistent, controversial, or simply inadequate.

In 1999 Kofi Annan spoke about these failures, and urged the United Nations members to reconcile the obligations of sovereignty with the humanitarian imperatives of Rwanda and Srebrenica. Canada launched the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in September 2000 in direct response to this challenge. The commission was given a one-year mandate to examine questions related to humanitarian intervention. The commission's report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, was published in December 2001.

This report makes three seminal contributions to the civilian protection debate that remain highly relevant today. First, the report proposes a new and constructive approach to the traditionally divisive issue of humanitarian intervention, presenting it not as an argument about the right to intervene but about the responsibility to protect. This is significant, because it shifts the focus to the needs of the vulnerable rather than the interests of the interveners. Second, the report proposes a new norm of sovereignty as responsibility, the idea that sovereignty confers not only rights but also responsibility for the maintenance of humanitarian standards. This reflects an evolved understanding of sovereignty, taking into account decades worth of advancement in human rights and humanitarian law.

The commission defined the responsibility to protect as having three dimensions: prevention, reaction, and rebuilding. Each are of equal priority, with prevention being the first among equals. However, while a great deal has been written about conflict prevention, much less new thinking has been done on the question of when and how force should be employed for the protection of civilians. It is here that the commission makes the third major contribution, identifying a threshold for action and outlining principles to guide the use of force in these cases. Since the publication of *The Responsibility to Protect* in 2001, Canada has maintained a multifaceted follow-up strategy, one that engages every level of our government.

The objective of our diplomatic efforts is threefold: first, to foster new consensus regarding when intervention is warranted on humanitarian grounds; second, to see this consensus enshrined in international law; and third, to ensure its spirit is reflected in the UN Security Council decision-making.

Following three years of Canadian advocacy, there is a broadening consensus regarding the need to protect humanitarian norms in crises, such as Darfur, and we are now turning our attention to ensuring that R2P, or responsibility to protect, principles are embedded in law.

Practically speaking, this requires a passage of two resolutions that together would provide the basis for R2P-consistent decision-

making within the UN. They are: one, a General Assembly resolution updating the foundational norm of state sovereignty to reflect the principle of sovereignty as responsibility, and positing a subsidiary responsibility on the part of the international community to act where the state can not or will not protect civilians; and second, a Security Council resolution outlining how the council will make good on its new-found responsibility to protect, including articulation of a threshold for action and a delineation of precautionary principles to govern how interventions are carried out.

Progress on these normative issues requires that we build an as broad as possible coalition of support among governments, civil society, the media, and other opinion leaders. This effort has benefited from the strong support of the Prime Minister, who made civilian protection and the responsibility to protect the organizing theme of his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, and who continues to actively promote this agenda among international leaders.

Our efforts are beginning to bear fruit. At the recent progressive governance summit in Hungary, the Prime Minister led the discussion on R2P and secured agreement on its core principles in the final declaration. He will lead similar discussions at the APEC summit in Santiago, Chile, later this week and at the Francophonie summit in Burkina Faso later this month. Canada's submission to the high-level panel on the responsibility to protect was well received, and will likely feature prominently in their report.

● (1550)

In addition to our own submission, Canada secured agreement among human security network ministers on a joint submission that endorses the main principles of R2P. This was sent to the high-level panel in the course of the summer.

Countries who have traditionally found it difficult to support international activism on humanitarian files are now coming onside. I would mention, for example, Mexico recently.

Notwithstanding these positive signs, there remain significant challenges to advancing this agenda internationally. Although there is a high degree of consensus regarding humanitarian principles, there remain serious differences among UN member states regarding how these principles should be enforced. In particular, there remains a high degree of scepticism among the community of nations regarding the legitimacy of using force to protect civilians. For this reason, it is necessary to continue building a broader and more solid base of support for civilian protection and the responsibility to protect. This requires not only high-level discussions among leaders and ministers but also a range of activities designed to build support from the ground up.

Key elements of our bottom-up efforts include regional advocacy designed to build on earlier dissemination efforts within opinion-making circles and regional organizations; government-to-government diplomacy aimed at securing strategic partnership for advancing this agenda multilaterally; and civil society coalition-building, to build an active constituency of support within the NGO community at both domestic and international levels.

• (1555)

[Translation]

In conclusion, The Responsibility to Protect is perhaps the most important contribution to date towards finding common ground for the defence of humanity for which the United Nations was founded. Clearly the road ahead will be a challenging one. However, we are also hopeful that the momentum on UN Reform will be helpful in advancing this agenda.

The report of the High-Level Panel is due next month. As my colleague indicated, we expect that report to make a strong reference to The Responsibility to Protect that will provide the basis for introducing the two resolutions I described a few minutes ago. If passed, these would represent a major shift in how the international community interprets its obligations in situations like Darfur. It would provide a solid basis for better UN decision-making, which means more preventive diplomacy, more effective civilian protection deployments when required and—eventually—fewer deaths as a result of war crimes and other atrocities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Gervais-Vidricaire. We'll now move on

[English]

to questions and answers, five minutes.

We'll start with Mr. Day, please.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Five minutes; is that a change?

The Chair: No, it's always been five. It's ten when it's ministers.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Ah.

The Chair: But if you have a good question and not too long, I might be prepared—

Mr. Stockwell Day: Oh, and the questions are always good, so—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stockwell Day: I want to thank both presenters. I recognize that you're here presenting information and are not responsible for policy decisions, so we won't wander into those areas.

We're all concerned about an increasing sense of not just inability but possibly irrelevance at the UN, because when it comes to crisis it seems they are very restricted in being able to act. Of course, Rwanda has become the symbol and the icon of all of that. In 1999 Canadians bombed Kosovo. Milosevic had slaughtered about 8,000 people by then. We joined a NATO-oriented force; it wasn't a UN force. The UN again was paralyzed, really. We went in there and bombed people.

Concerning this inability of the UN to act in times of real crisis, though there are success stories with the UN also, do you have any information that might help us as a committee grapple with this problem: that at the UN there are an increasing number of states that are classified as “failed states”—usually repressive, non-democratic regimes—and they increasingly vote in a bloc? Madame Gervais-Vidricaire raised some good points, because they talk about how to build a broader range of support.

Of course, we endorse everything that's been reported so far, such as the necessity for prevention, etc. But when it comes to the crunch and to making a decision, especially now that there's some agreement—and I support what the Prime Minister said about responsibility to correct—is anybody coming forward with any formulas, or any way to deal with this non-democratic, failed-state, repressive-regime bloc of countries? It's quite significant; I think it's up to around 80 now—or maybe more. They stymie what needs to be done.

At the Security Council itself, do you really think we're going to get 100% support if there is a need for an intervention with, for instance, China there? We've seen China's intervention veto on a number of critical questions. Are you aware of any work that's being done to deal with that formula, and does it justify the Prime Minister trying to build—it looks as though he's trying to build—other multilateral associations, be it G-8 or G-20, or whatever?

The Chair: Mr. de Kerckhove.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Thank you.

You've covered a very wide range, but I'll try to tackle a few of these, and Marie will hopefully come to my rescue if needed.

Mr. Stockwell Day: It's mainly the question of this voting bloc.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: First of all, starting from the premise of the high-level panel, I think when the Secretary General struck that panel it was precisely in order to answer some of those questions you have been raising, and particularly in a day and age when the number of failed states has increased.

If you're talking about the block vote, I think both Marie and I are very proud to be able to report that—effectively today—we've managed to get a number of countries around our resolution on human rights in Iran, which means that despite the block voting you've referred to, on very critical issues in which we ourselves are capable of building a coalition we manage to get through. This is not to deny that our concern for that specific one—because I'm using a typical example to answer your question—was that the Africans would vote *en bloc* and that the CARICOM, for that matter, would vote *en bloc*.

There is an issue out there, which the panel hopefully is going to tackle. There's one fundamental issue, which is a kind of mentality at the UN that is somewhat different from that of the rest of the world. It is the pitting of the G-77 against the so-called “rest of the world” or the north. This is why, in this context of major reform, we're not tackling strictly with the high-level panel, because the high-level panel, as I said, is looked at more as answering the needs of the north—because we focus more on security issues—even though the panel will recognize that poverty is in fact as critical to security as the struggle against terrorism.

As you know, there is a series of reports that are coming out leading to the September 2005 60th anniversary and the summit of the UN. One of them will be Jeffrey Sachs' report on what the requirements are for the south: what their requirements are in terms of development assistance; what the level of assistance required is. There is an attempt to answer those critical needs in order to break, in fact, this "G-77 versus the others" mentality.

Marie will certainly answer on what we are trying to do to break the logjam on some of those clearly human rights violations and untoward countries or failed states. Then I think she may want to add something. Then I'll come back for a few concluding comments on your specific question, if I may, Mr. Patry.

•(1600)

The Chair: We'll go to Madame Gervais-Vidricaire, please.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Thank you. That's a very good question, a very broad one. Just very quickly, I guess you know the fact that the Secretary General established the high-level panel indicates he felt, like the membership, that there was a need for reform and that, yes, there's a lot of criticism out there on the relevancy of the UN, or the lack of relevancy.

At the same time, I think when you look at the Iraq debate, which was a very difficult one for the Security Council, the fact of the matter was that even the United States felt it had to go to the council. At the end of the day, they decided to go to Iraq without having the blessing of the council. But at first they did go to the council, and there was no agreement within the council. I think it was a clear indication of the importance of the council even for a big power like the United States.

With regard to the use of veto, which is always difficult, you mentioned Rwanda. I think Rwanda has been a very traumatic experience for everybody: all the members of the council, all the members of the General Assembly. I think there's a sentiment that this should never happen again. Once you've said that, what means do you take to prevent another Rwanda? And frankly, Darfur is not looking too good at the moment.

We are doing a lot of work to try to bring all of the membership of the UN to accept the notion that when you're facing major humanitarian catastrophes—and this is what the responsibility to protect is about, it's not just human rights abuses, it's major humanitarian catastrophes with massive loss of life—first of all, the Security Council should act and act quickly, and there shouldn't be any use of veto. In fact, the big problem in the case of Rwanda was not so much the veto issue; it was the lack of political will. I guess big countries didn't see that there was a strategic interest in what was happening, and when people realized it was a real tragedy, it was too late.

Finally, to make a point on the human rights issue, Ferry mentioned the adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly—which was not a done deal, I can tell you: it required a lot of work. We're satisfied with the result and we're happy that the resolution passed. But the fact of the—

•(1605)

Mr. Stockwell Day: Sorry, which resolution?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: On Iran. Just today, the resolution that Canada introduced at the assembly was adopted.

Mr. Stockwell Day: For the record, Mr. Chairman, I congratulated the Minister of Foreign Affairs on that. That was something we've been urging.

The Chair: Shall we do a report in the House of Commons for that?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stockwell Day: No, I just wanted you to know.

Thank you.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: I will conclude by noting that at the Commission on Human Rights, as you know, it's a more limited membership and there's a problem there. The membership of the commission is only 53 members and those countries that feel vulnerable try to ensure they will be elected to the commission and because they are agreed states in the various regional groups in most cases, not in all cases, you end up having countries like—

A voice: Like you know who.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: —yes, you know who, who are sitting on the commission, who have the right to vote. So we have to work on this. There's a clear need for reform as well.

Mr. Stockwell Day: All right, thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Desrochers, please.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome you to this important meeting on the United Nations Reform. Mr. de Kerckhove, my attention was drawn to the last line of your presentation, where you say: "Either the member states of the UN gather the courage to contribute to the reform of the institution, or its usefulness will diminish, and our capacity to act collectively on a multilateral level will be undermined."

For some time now, it has appeared to me that, when things go before the United Nations, not much is resolved. There are major players around the Security Council table, but there does not appear to be responsible leadership in the United Nations with regard to our changing society.

How does the Canadian government describe the courage you refer to, and what approach do you think could really give the UN leadership? Mr. Martin went to talk about Darfur on September 22, but not much has happened since then, although a lot of speeches have been made. There does not appear to be any interest when the United Nations speaks. People listen a lot more to the major players.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Thank you.

I'll start by recalling that the United Nations is in fact its member states. The United Nations is an organization, but, as it is said, an organization can't be better than what its member states are prepared to put into it.

I think there has in fact been an existential crisis at the United Nations, particularly with the Iraq question, as well as Rwanda and elsewhere. The Secretary General has considered the problem and decided to take real action in an attempt to correct the situation. However, don't forget that there are 193 members, which makes for a group that is extremely hard to manage and bring to a consensus.

That said, as Marie Gervais-Vidricaire mentioned, even the Iraq crisis, despite its flagrant and demoralizing unilateralism, showed that ultimately, in the long term, there is no longer any single power in the world that can solve the problems it faces alone. So there is a return to the United Nations as an essential organization, which does not necessarily mean that it succeeds every time.

Consider, for example, the recent crisis in the Ivory Coast. The Security Council has just unanimously passed a resolution imposing very specific sanctions. Let me tell you that I'm absolutely convinced that, through the United Nations, there will be positive developments on the Ivory Coast issue, which does not mean that all problems will be solved, since it's up to the Ivory Coast to solve its own problems. It's President Gbagbo who ultimately has to adopt the resolutions passed at Marcoussis and those of Accra III. So there's a process. When matters came to a standstill, it was through the UN that they were resolved. So there's a political will.

That said, there are types of political will with variable geometries. Some are expressed much more effectively, much more quickly. As regards the Darfur crisis itself, I'm absolutely not saying you're wrong. The Prime Minister raised it and triggered the debate through his remarks, particularly through his offer of \$20 million to start to empower the African Union to do its work, which, at the outset, is observation work. Consequently, there is nevertheless a genuine attempt within the United Nations to make the states accountable. I believe that's the reform trend.

However, I referred to courage, and I reaffirm that. If the states themselves don't take charge of themselves and aren't ready to adopt measures to reform their own ways of managing their crises, hence The Responsibility to Protect, or to give the UN the means to act, multilateralism could well be in for a shock.

• (1610)

Mr. Odina Desrochers: I understand you. That was a very good presentation, but how will the Canadian government impose its leadership in the context of the UN Reform?

Mr. Ferry de Kerekhove: First, I'll say that, since the first point on The Responsibility to Protect was admirably presented by my colleague, I won't go back to it. It's a Canadian initiative. Seen from Ottawa, The Responsibility to Protect seems to be a very nice concept. Everyone agrees; we all agree around this table as well. But if you think that the countries we're facing take it the same way, I have to tell you that's not the case. A considerable number of countries are very hostile to this courageous effort: in their minds, it entails a right of intervention in their domestic affairs.

When this initiative was launched, after the Iraq affair, many countries backed away even further. Why? Because they got the impression that it was tantamount to a licence to intervene, whereas the Prime Minister had clearly said that was not the case. No, it's absolutely not the case, but introducing an initiative that calls into

question the basis of the sovereign right of states to administer their domestic affairs requires considerable courage.

Our starting point is obviously very clear, since it is The Responsibility to Protect our populations. That's the first test of courage. The second—and I imagine there will be other questions on this point—is the Prime Minister's initiative concerning the G-20. I believe that, when he went to the UN to talk with the Secretary General, he agreed that his initiative on the G-20 could serve to mobilize support for the reform trend. If there is a G-20, it wouldn't be surprising that an attempt is made in this working group to become the champions of UN Reform. I'm not talking about a substitute or alternative, but simply a group of countries from the north and south, which are globally important, which realize—as Mr. Day said and as you yourselves say—the crisis in the international system and the number of deteriorating states and that want to strengthen the UN institutions.

The Chair: Thank you. We'll now move on to Mr. Martin.

[*English*]

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

Thank you both for being here today. I personally wish I was on this committee.

I would submit to both of you that there is no lack of solutions and ideas internationally. You spoke about Darfur, but we could talk about the eastern Congo, we could talk about Acholi-land in northern Uganda, and the list goes on and on interminably.

I would also submit to you that we have a judicial framework without an enforcement mechanism. I think the primary problem we have is that there isn't an obligation to enforce.

I would also submit to you that to argue this case on humanitarian grounds will prove to be fruitless, because the case can be made passionately, and has been made constantly for so many decades.

I would argue, perhaps, that the way to get around it is to deal with it on economic grounds, because the failure to intervene and to prevent deadly conflict, as we all know, has widespread implications and ramifications, not only on aid, but also trade and also on international economics. In fact, as you had acknowledged, conflict is sinking the United Nations, from an economic perspective, based on the obligations that are placed upon it for peacekeeping and peacemaking operations.

Therefore, I would also like to submit to you that the current configuration of the UN Security Council, sir, that you mentioned is the primary obligation to the reforms that will come out of the study.

What is the response of the P-5 to the responsibility to protect and the obligation of leaders to adhere to the common norms that they must do?

Secondly, do you think that the L-20 proposed by the Prime Minister could be a way to actually ensure that the plans, the wonderful plans that are there and will come out of the study, will be married up with the resources and the obligation to implement? In other words, can we use the L-20 to fulfill our obligations to protect innocents, to prevent conflict, and to also deal with protection and post-conflict reconstruction?

•(1615)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mrs. Gervais-Vidricaire.

[English]

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Thank you.

I will answer your first question and my colleague will take up the second one.

With regard to the attitude of the P-5 in regard to the responsibility to protect, I think it's fair to say that the U.K. is quite supportive, and in fact very recently Prime Minister Blair spoke about the responsibility to protect in very positive terms as being a priority in the context of the reform exercise.

France has been quite supportive as well. The U.S. has not spoken openly or publicly, to my knowledge, about the concept. We are in touch, of course, with our colleagues from the State Department, and they find it an interesting concept. In the past, when we were on the Security Council at the end of the 1990s, we managed to get resolutions adopted in the Security Council on the protection of civilians. And those resolutions were adopted by consensus, with the support of the United States.

As is no surprise, Russia and China will be the two difficult ones among the P-5, for obvious reasons. As Ferry was mentioning earlier, a number of countries will see the responsibility to protect as a *carte blanche* for an intervention, and there's a lot of anxiety and nervousness about that. And Iraq didn't do anything to help.

When we are asked about Iraq and the responsibility to protect, we tend to say that this is not what the report is talking about, that's not the kind of situation the report is talking about; this is about dealing with a situation where you expect a massive loss of lives and so forth. It's meant to deal with a different type of situation.

I would tend to disagree with what you said concerning the impossibility of getting agreement on humanitarian grounds. I think the international community has evolved since Rwanda, and, as I said, I think there's a sentiment because there's the weight of public opinion as well, especially in developed countries, but not only there. In Africa, I can tell you that when you speak to Africans they were very traumatized by what happened in Rwanda. The Africans are not opposed to the responsibility to protect, and in some cases they have already integrated this notion in the status of their regional organizations. I would say that Asia is more difficult.

Hon. Keith Martin: But this bird will not fly unless Russia, China, the U.S., and the P-5 actually say yes.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: If I can respond, I think it will be interesting to see what comes out of the report of the high-level panel. I think there will be a lot of incentive from the Secretary General to get some kind of package adopted. From what we

understand, the responsibility to protect will be there, will be part of the recommendation.

We think that if it comes from the Secretary General as part of a package that includes many other things, hopefully the membership of the United Nations will see that it's in our collective interest to move ahead in this direction. But it's not easy; this is not easy, and it's not something that can be accomplished overnight. We have been working on this for the past four years. The report was mandated four years ago, and it requires a lot of persistence, but that's what we're doing.

The Chair: Mr. de Kerckhove.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Thank you.

I only have a few additional comments.

I think you made a very important point, Mr. Martin, about the economic underpinning, the trade underpinning all of that. Indeed, as I think I emphasized in my opening remarks, the high-level panel is focusing, basically, writ large, on the security dimension, but it also has identified that poverty is as much a threat as anti-terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, or whatever. At least that's what we see from the report. I think you have to look at the overall package of reform as a single entity. The high-level panel will probably underpin it, but it will not do it on its own.

I mentioned Jeffrey Sachs, but I also mentioned the continuity of the Doha approach, or round, if you want to call it that. Then you have the very critical Monterrey consensus, which is really one place where north and south have combined to agree that there was responsibility on the part of the donors but also key responsibility on the part of those who are receiving development assistance. It is a commitment to increase aid, increase the effectiveness of aid, but it is also a commitment on the part of the developing world to provide the framework within which development assistance can be more effective and can really deliver the result.

You also have the Johannesburg commitment on environment, which also ties in with all that. Of course, you will be going on the millennium development goals plus five in September 2005, which will be a litmus test as to how the overall architecture of humanity, as it were, has responded to the key goals of the millennium in order to achieve better development and progress.

To that extent, if you look at it in that broad context, then the role of the L-20, if it sees the light of day—and again, this is not directly within my responsibility, but I've been following it very closely anyway—could exercise a major role, as I said, as the champion of reform because it will bring together not all the countries, but a group of countries who are leaders in their own regions and leaders in terms of development.

For instance, you were talking about the difficulty in convincing China and Russia to join the R2P, but on the other hand, China is keen and eager to follow up on the L-20. As such, we're bound to see that group, if it emerged, becoming champions of reform. It will not be the only issue that it will probably tackle, but it is certainly going to be a critical dimension.

I'm somewhat more hopeful, but I fully agree with Marie Gervais-Vidricaire that we're in for the long haul. It's going to take time to deliver, but at least Canada is in the forefront, and I think we can take a lot of pride in the courage we've demonstrated.

Thank you.

•(1620)

The Chair: Merci.

Now we're going to pass to Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Yes. Thanks again for coming.

Oh, we missed Ms. McDonough. Sorry.

The Chair: Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for meeting with the committee this afternoon.

I have three questions, and I'll try to make them brief to give more time for you to respond.

In your submission you made the point that member states were not specifically consulted or invited to submit their views to the panel. I'm wondering, in terms of the submissions that Canada did make, whether Canada, in turn, consulted the respective NGOs, academics, and the considerable community of informed and engaged civil society around Canada's views. Could you outline for us what process was done? Secondly, when the panel does produce its report, will there will be a further consultative process to benefit from that significant input?

I think we're all aware that when the Secretary General launched the high-level panel, he made a very specific plea that there be bold, far-reaching proposals brought forward. One of the concerns that I have, which seems to put Canada in the position of being less than a totally faithful partner or a bit of a two-timer, is for Canada to be increasingly.... I know the Prime Minister has been championing this. The G-20 is kind of the new game in town and is really going to be critically important here. The very effect of that can be to erode Canada's clear commitment to the United Nations, as the multilateral institution that it needs to be, to ensure peace and security and justice in the world.

You also spoke about not second-guessing on what's going to come from the panel and commenting on it in advance. Has there been any position expressed by Canada on the specific structural reform issues?

In other words, you talked about how there are some proposals about expansion of membership, specifically an additional tier of non-member nations, for example. Has Canada put forward any proposals for structural changes that seem difficult to achieve but nevertheless imperative for us to figure out?

•(1625)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. de Kerckhove.

[English]

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Thank you so much for those questions.

Indeed I think the independence of the commission was such that they certainly did not want to have member states consulted in any official capacity, but I can tell you that there has been a stream of visitors going to see the members of the commission. The fact that our own Prime Minister and our minister went to talk to them is clear evidence....

I went to see the drafting group and all that, because we have a high stake in it. This is why, even though we were not asked to deliver, we delivered our two papers, because we thought that particularly on our responsibility to protect, but also on the overall management of the UN, we had a very important contribution to make because of our past record within the United Nations.

I have to say that in terms of consultation—and maybe after I finish this one Marie can give you some more detail on how the consultation process on R2P was done—our submission reflects in fact the dialogue that Mr. Graham, for instance, launched, where we had extensive consultation, and we've imparted a lot of it in our submission regarding our continued commitment to multilateralism.

You also asked about what comes after the high-level panel and consolidated process. Let me quickly say on that score—and I'll be very candid here—that we have two concerns. One is that there be an undue focus on the reform of the UN Security Council, which could trump in a way the much more overarching package of reform over and beyond the UN Security Council reform. My understanding is that the panel will ask that member countries and the Secretary General look at it separately so that the whole focus on the broad series of reform is not ignored.

The second concern I have is that between the tabling of the high-level panel, which is in early December, and the ultimate summit in September 2005 there will be a lot of time. The Secretary General will make his report on the millennium development goal accomplishments sometime in March.

So you'll have two lags: first the high-level panel and the Sachs report that comes in January, then you will have the Secretary General's report in March, which should bring all those pieces together. That in itself is already a huge work to be done in order to be convincing for the member state countries. And then you have the period between March and September 2005, where there will be a lot of work needed to actually get the package approved by the member states on the 60th anniversary.

This is what I mean by a consolidated process.

I sincerely hope.... My feeling is that, indeed, Canada will be able to support the overall package that comes out, and we will certainly be in the forefront in ensuring that support is also obtained from other countries. Whether there is a misgiving here and there about the nitty-gritty of the report is irrelevant. I think the way to get the package delivered and implemented is to really have a global commitment to it.

First of all, I can assure you that from what I see, the report of the high-level panel will be bold and far-reaching. We have all reason to believe that on R2P, for instance, it is clear-cut that it will be.

Canada is remaining very faithful, because indeed the G-20 is not a substitute to the Security Council. It is not a substitute to the G-8. It is basically an expansion of the earlier very effective concept that the Prime Minister, when he was Minister of Finance, developed to help resolve crises like the financial crisis in Asia, like the reform of the World Bank and the IMF. Basically he found that this bringing together of relevant nations around the table to work on specific issues had proven very effective, and what he's basically trying to do is do the same. As such, I do not at all think that it's an erosion of a commitment to the UN. The G-8 is not an erosion of the commitment to the UN. Quite the contrary. It will hopefully bring together those countries in support of the reform package with the weight that these individual countries bring to that.

•(1630)

The third one was on the structure of reform. No, we have not proposed any specific structure for the UN Security Council, because it's been an issue that has been around. You had the Razali proposal in the nineties. It's a very difficult subject, but I think we have a position of principle, meaning that we're not going to start putting out alternative proposals. As I said in my opening remarks, we do not believe that adding to the number of permanent members will add to the effectiveness of the UN Security Council. As I also said, we do not cherish additional vetoes; in fact, if they could be relinquished, it would be a better thing.

There is also an issue out there for Canada. We want to make sure, as I said, that we are able to sit on the Security Council on a regular basis. If you look at past history, we've been on the Security Council basically once every ten years. Whatever reform package may emerge, we want to make sure we retain that ability to participate.

I think I'll stop at that.

The Chair: You have one minute, Madame. Go ahead.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Very quickly, on consultations with NGOs on the responsibility to protect, for example, I would just mention that when the commission prepared its report, it consulted widely around the world, including with civil society, NGOs, and so forth.

We have established a network of NGOs led by the World Federalist Movement leader, and we are in constant touch with the NGOs. I would just mention that two weeks ago there was a meeting on the responsibility to protect in Darfur, for example, with organizations such as Project Ploughshares, CARE, Oxfam, MSF Canada, and so forth.

So this is an ongoing process. We need to have civil society on board, and this is a way to advance these complex issues. That's what we did for land mines, for example, and that's what we did for the International Criminal Court. So it's very much part of the plan.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I just want to write down one comment that the gentleman made at the end of that, because I think it's important.

But before we go there, our committee meets because we want to discuss the reform of the United Nations. For some of us, it means learning more about the United Nations and the way it's structured, the mandates it has, and perhaps why it isn't responding in cases where the world generally believes it should.

They have a diminishing role, in some people's opinion. We've seen what happened historically to the League of Nations when they simply wanted to debate the issues and never to react. The concern many have today is that the United Nations, if it isn't there, is headed down that track. We've seen it with Rwanda; we have seen it and are seeing it now in Sudan and the Darfur region. We see a lot of things and times and places where we believe that a strong body could have made a difference, if they only had had the will.

We have the Commission on Human Rights at the United Nations being chaired in 2003 by Libya. I would suggest that may support some of the reasons why people have a diminished view of what the United Nations is really doing for them. We have the oil-for-food program, which the paper today shows that Saddam Hussein may have taken or stolen \$21 billion out of. Those were programs that the United Nations was holding up as benchmarks as to why they were so good, and now we're seeing that one committee after another committee is reviewing them.

Our Prime Minister—and Ms. McDonough touched on this—has trumpeted the idea of a G-20, where these elite leaders, though I hate to use that word, would gather and discuss the world problems. Again, doesn't that diminish the role of the United Nations?

How can Canada play a role? How can Canada play an important role in reforming this? You've come out with a few minor—though I hate to say minor—suggestions that may be part of what has to be done with the Security Council, but how can we play a real role in reforming the United Nations?

The comment that you made right at the end of your last statement was that Canada wants to get back on the Security Council, that it is there every ten years or so but wants to “retain that ability to participate” at the Security Council. I would suggest that Canada itself, to a degree, has diminished its ability to do so, because even when the Prime Minister talks about 5,000 troops that are needed in Sudan, with 1,000 that may come from Africa, we haven't got the ability as a nation to send a number of troops in there.

If we want to play a role in what happens there, are we doing enough at home to put ourselves in a position where we can make a difference?

•(1635)

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Again, that is a series of very good questions. Maybe I'll start with your last comment: do we have the ability to play a role?

You know, a role can be played in many different ways. It can be played diplomatically, it can be played by sending troops, it can be played by sending police forces, and so on and so forth. In the case of Darfur, for example, the Prime Minister announced \$20 million to reinforce the African Union mission. We have a couple of Canadian Forces' planners. That's not much, but they are having an impact, because what is really lacking in terms of the African Union mission and what is crucial is the planning side of it. Sometimes you don't necessarily need to send thousands of troops, but you need to be strategic in your contribution. We are making a difference through our humanitarian assistance, as well.

Of course, if you have more resources, and so forth, you can do more. But I wouldn't diminish the importance of the role that we play diplomatically at the United Nations. I think very few countries have the credibility that Canada has, and we are participating in all discussions that are of any importance, I would say.

You referred to the fact that Libya was chairing the Commission on Human Rights. You might remember that a few years ago Canada voted against that; we were one of two or three countries that voted against it. So when we speak about courage, when we speak about standing for our principles, I think that was a good example. It's clear there are problems out there, but I think we can play and are playing an important role.

The Chair: Mr. de Kerckhove.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: I have a few additional comments—but very rapidly this time.

I think I've answered the reference to the G-20 as it being supportive of the UN and not a substitute.

You mentioned oil-for-food. I agree with you, it's an unprecedented story.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Is it?

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Oh, yes. There's an inquiry going on. Prima facie, I would definitely call it unprecedented. I could go in much detail on the oil-for-food program, if you wanted, but basically my tenet at this stage is that we are confident that the UN itself and the inquiry system put into place will eventually get to the bottom of it, and that there will be the appropriate remedies. And there are many, many mechanisms in place; but I must say that on an issue of this magnitude, work is in progress.

I would like to mention Haiti, where we are also making a major contribution. When you have Argentinian and Brazilian troops and you have Canadian police, and all of them working together, that is done under the overarching aegis of the United Nations. Let us not discount the quality of what is being done there.

I think I'll just stop at that.

● (1640)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Boudria.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): First, I'm not sure I share my colleague Mr. Sorenson's view that the UN is

losing its influence. How many UN troops are there currently around the world?

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: There are 100,000.

Hon. Don Boudria: Is it true that we are the only country in the world that has taken part in all UN peace missions to date, or have we missed one?

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: We've missed a few.

● (1645)

Hon. Don Boudria: But that's not bad.

I'm not of the view that the UN's role is diminishing. On Sunday, I went to Haiti with a number of colleagues. I saw the work that the Canada police forces are doing there. We had a meeting with them, and we saw their work in the streets. We also met with the MINUSTAH, under Brazil's military leadership, and we also had a very long meeting with the Chilean authority, which is there as well. In my view, and that of all Haitians, there's no doubt that this presence is making a difference between what could be called a

[*English*]

Hobbesian state of nature, where life is "brutish and short".

[*Translation*]

and a semblance of order, despite all of today's imperfections, to cite only one example.

What concerns me, however, is that the general public becomes sensitive to or agitated over a disaster when CNN tells us there is one. If CNN doesn't tell us there is one, it hasn't occurred. And that's becoming increasingly true with the years through that network's omnipresence. There are one or two others that are similar, but not as bad as it.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Like FOX.

Hon. Don Boudria: Not entirely, because I don't even know whether they claim to present the news.

In that case, for example, we're told about Darfur, but never about the millions of refugees in all the countries around Sierra Leone. It's as though they didn't exist, as if there never had been any or as if they had been repatriated following the troubles in those countries. None of that is true. Those people are still there, but we don't hear about them.

It's a bit like that around the world. If there's been this media presence, people react toward our decision-makers, there's more talk at the UN or, at least, the media are sensitive to the situation and give it a lot of coverage, and there's intervention. Could you respond to what I've just said? What do we do to counter that, so that we're not always saying that things are only going badly in Africa? Things are going badly, but there are places where things aren't going badly, and we don't hear about them either. As for the places where things are going badly, we should hear about them in a less selective manner than is currently the case.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Mr. Boudria, I believe all the points you raise are entirely valid. I'll give you an example that will only confirm the truth of what you've just said. You've all heard, or you should all have heard, about the invasion of desert locusts in Africa. Well, if we had intervened—"we" meaning all of humanity that can intervene—in the first three weeks, it would have cost us approximately \$2 or \$3 million. Today, the figure stands around \$100 million.

You know what? We're human beings on a planet that is far from perfect, and I believe that fact has to be recognized. We have to work together to improve it, and that's definitely what Canada is trying to do. As for our current presence, I can give you the figures if you wish. Around the world, you have 113 civil police officers, 15 military observers and 195 troops as such. There were 323 as of October 31 of this year, if you count MINUSTAH and MINUC, that is in Haiti, Congo, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Syria, Cyprus—one more person—in the Ivory Coast and in the Middle East. These are Canada's contributions to the UN missions as of October 31. This currently places us thirty-third among the countries involved.

That said, as my colleague Ms. Gervais-Vidricaire noted, it's very often the quality of what we provide that counts more than the number. I don't think that's a factor we'll try to advance, that we'll try to calculate, because it's incalculable. However, our contribution is still enormous.

That said, the CNN factor is undeniable. However, as operators, as bureaucratic stakeholders, we're not influenced by the CNN factor. When there's a crisis, we try to work on it.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: I would simply like to add that the donor countries are coordinating their humanitarian efforts better. One year ago, Sweden started up an initiative called Good Humanitarian Donorship. A major conference was held at which agreement was reached on a number of principles that the donor countries were to implement. In addition, roughly a month ago, Canada organized a follow-up conference, here in Ottawa.

One of the important principles is to grant funds based on needs, not solely based on the CNN effect. As you so clearly put it, a very large number of crises have unfortunately been going on for a long time; there are also enormous needs that must be addressed, and not only in the countries that we can see on television every evening.

I think it's understood that it was really necessary to take joint action in the matter to prevent the donor countries from focusing on the same countries, thus forgetting half of those that have needs.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bellavance, please.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony.

I have a particular concern, and you touched on it earlier, Mr. Kerckhove, in answer to a question from my NDP colleague, and that's the reform of other international organizations. You mentioned the IMF and the World Bank. I wanted to know whether the department's approach to UN Reform was related to the reform of those other international organizations.

I'm concerned by this issue because, in another life, I was Parliamentary Secretary to the member for Joliette, Pierre Paquette, who is a permanent member of this committee. In all modesty, I would mention that I made a small contribution to the drafting of the motion—and I'll spare you the details—which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government, through its Minister of Finance, should conduct consultations with the partner signatories of the agreements concerned by the Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act for the purpose of amending those agreements to include respect for human rights as an integral part of the mandate of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development so that the policy development of those organizations takes into account the effects of those policies on progress and regression in the area of respect for human rights.

We worked on that, but an election has been held since then. Unless you find it embarrassing, I would first like to know what the department thinks of this, and then whether your approach is related to the reform of other organizations.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr. de Kerckhove, for the second part, please don't answer on behalf of the government or the department. You may nevertheless provide details on the first part of the question, then include the second part. Thank you.

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: It's a question of trust, Mr. Chair.

As I believe I said at the outset, the report of the High Level Panel is only one of the elements of a general reform trend. The Jeffrey Sachs report, which was commissioned by the UN Secretary General and should be available in January or mid-January, will address a very important aspect. It will focus on the relationship between the UN development program and the international Bretton Woods financial institutions. So that will be an attempt to determine who does what in support of whom.

I have twice been head of mission overseas. I have thus had the opportunity to see the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the UN organizations working together. There is generally solid cooperation. However, it often happens that people wonder why one institution is doing this, while the other is doing that. In this regard, as many countries do by the way, we ask that the specialized UN agencies work in a more organized manner in the field. We want a little more consistency. That consistency must first stem from cooperation between the agencies and the international financial institutions, as well as from better cooperation—and this is where all these elements come into play—between the recipient developing country and the international organizations that are there.

With regard to human rights, I'll take the liberty of recalling, on a more personal note, that the events at Tiananmen Square, in China, took place when I was director of economic relations with the developing countries. One of the major questions that arose at the time was whether the World Bank would return to China, in view of the human rights violations committed there.

It's not as though those events were ignored. However, the criterion used at the time, and which moreover has really become an act of faith, was the criterion of basic human needs. In other words, if a project met the basic and immediate needs of the population, the World Bank could continue to make loans. That said, it took more than a year and a half before the World Bank returned to China.

In short, human rights are clearly a consideration that plays a certain role in the deliberations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

• (1650)

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: It's part of Canada's efforts to try to ensure that human rights issues are taken into consideration in virtually all contexts. We talk about mainstreaming. When we address these international financial institutions issues, that's the approach we take.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

We have about ten minutes left. I'll go for one question, without any preamble, from Mr. Martin, Mr. Day, and also Ms. McDonough.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: The question is simply this: what has been done to better integrate the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions—in particular, their coordination and focus of roles, especially the World Bank, which I think has had a severe case of mission creep?

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: That's an interesting question. Again it's slightly beyond the immediate mandate of UN reform per se, but I can tell you that the whole discussion that is now taking place in the Jeffrey Sachs report context is along those lines, in the sense that I was talking to the deputy administrator of the UNDP, who basically put the question in an entirely different way, but it joins your question. He said it's high time that nation-states tell us where they want us, on what subject they want us, and whether we should be there at all.

It was *un agent provocateur* question, because of course as an assistant administrator of the UNDP, it was obvious that he knew and he thought he was critical. What he meant is that mission creep happens when you don't have a clearly defined mandate. I think that is what is really going to be the outcome of the Jeffrey Sachs report.

It is obvious when you sit around a table, like a consultative group on Indonesia or the Pakistan Development Forum, at which I represented Canada, that the World Bank has a huge stake. It has a very important role, and you have more and more donor countries—for instance, the Netherlands—that are now really working directly and contributing directly to some of the World Bank projects. There is a sense that there is a lot of ability there, and the Prime Minister, who was Minister of Finance, was also one of the first persons to say “yes, but there have been some significant problems there; therefore, they also need to be revised.” I think we're going in the right direction.

• (1655)

The Chair: You have a short question, Mr. Day?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

As a point of information, realizing that we're not debating policy questions with you, what's the process at the UN for Canada in terms of selecting? How do we select who votes on our behalf at the UN?

I'm talking about our representatives at the United Nations. We read about a vote at the UN; how does that person get instruction on how to vote?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Our representatives in New York, whether it's the ambassador or the first secretary, will vote on instructions from Ottawa, from the Department of Foreign Affairs. If it's an issue of interest to more than one department, of course there will be interdepartmental consultations to arrive at the Canadian position, but our delegation in New York is always instructed in detail because we know in advance which resolutions will be presented. We have time to look at them and arrive at the position, which we communicate to the delegation.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Chairman, again as a point of information, unless I'm unaware of it, I don't regularly see the advance notice of these votes. I'm not saying anybody is hiding anything, but I don't see advance notice of those. Is there a way we can get those, or is that an extraordinary process?

The Chair: Are they on the website?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: I guess on websites you would have, in some cases, draft resolutions.

Normally what happens is that the draft resolutions are circulated. They are negotiated. They are open-ended consultations for members to suggest changes, and eventually, in the case of the United Nations in New York, you have a vote in the committee and then a few weeks later in plenary of the General Assembly. So if you look at the order of the day or the program for the various committees, you will see that a vote will take place on item 1, 2, or 3, on such a date. So it's announced in advance. We knew, for example, that the resolution on Iran would likely be voted on today.

A voice: The website is very sophisticated.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Stockwell Day: Just for a function purpose, would it be too onerous for us to be...? Rather than us having to check that process, as you and the department become aware of those votes coming up, can we get notice so we can see what's coming?

Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove: Can we take that one under advisement, in terms of the mechanics? Of course anything we can do to assist parliamentarians to be better informed about UN issues, we'd be delighted to do. I'd just take it under advisement, because I want to know the technicality and talk to those people who deal with the relationship with parliamentary.... We'll certainly look into it.

The Chair: I understand your question, Mr. Day, but I think I'm going to ask the clerk if there is any way in which every member of the committee can be made aware, through a mechanism from the United Nations or our embassy in New York, if there is such a vote on such a date.

Mr. Stockwell Day: That would be great.

The Chair: Madam McDonough, a very short question—half of a question.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I think we may not agree on all matters, but we would certainly have substantial agreement about the absolute horrors of the Rwanda genocide, and the lessons to be learned from it. Despite Canada constantly congratulating itself for being such a multilateralist and so solid a champion of the United Nations and its role, and so on, it really failed almost entirely to do anything significant around the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, in terms of engaging Canadians, drawing attention, and building the case for why we need to be a great deal better prepared to deal with such things. I wonder if you could just comment on that.

Second, again—

The Chair: I don't want to push you, but it's already five o'clock.

Madame Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, please.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Yes. We organized a very important event in New York to commemorate the tenth—

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I'm talking about in Canada.

The Chair: On Parliament Hill.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Well, yes, there was something in Parliament, but I think it's important to mention what we did as well internationally, because Bill Graham was the minister at the time and he co-chaired the session with the Prime Minister of Rwanda in New York. The Secretary General was there, and General Dallaire was there. It was a full room. It was a very impressive session. One long-timer at the UN said it was one of the best sessions he had seen at the UN in ten years. We had survivors—

● (1700)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: But not in Canada.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: It was televised, you know. I would say it was a major event. I know there was a series of events, not organized necessarily by the government, but—

The Chair: I just want to thank both witnesses.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much to our two witnesses. We'll now suspend the meeting for two or three minutes.

[*English*]

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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