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Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

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•(0850)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): I'd like to call to order meeting number four of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and our briefing on the situation in Libya.

To all of our guests, some who have been here before and some who are here for the first time, welcome. Thank you for taking the time to be with us.

From CIDA, we have with us Vincent LePape, director, North Africa and Middle East, as well as Leslie Norton, the director general of the international humanitarian assistance directorate.

I don't believe you have any opening statements, but you'll be here to answer questions.

We also have with us, from the Department of National Defence, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Holman, assistant deputy judge advocate general, operations, and Brigadier-General Craig King, director general, operations, strategic joint staff.

Welcome. I don't believe you have any opening statements but you're here to answer questions, so thank you very much.

From the Department of Foreign Affairs, we have with us Marie Gervais-Vidricaire—I'm working on my French pronunciation—director general of the stabilization and reconstruction task force, START. Thank you for being here.

That leaves us with you, Ms. Martin. You're the last one. You're going to give us our opening statement for today.

I think all of you know how the committee works. After the opening remarks, we'll have questions from around the room. Again, thanks to all of you for being here and for taking the time to brief us on Libya.

Without more conversation, I'm going to turn it over to you, Ms. Martin, to brief us with your opening statements.

Mrs. Barbara Martin (Director General, Middle East and Maghreb Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Members of the committee, it's truly a great pleasure to meet with you today against the backdrop of a Libya that has seen tremendous changes in recent weeks. Most of the Libyan people, including those in Tripoli, are now freed from the control of the Gadhafi regime.

Despite this positive progress, there are still civilians under threat in a few cities in which the pro-Gadhafi forces are fiercely resisting the reality of the end of the regime. Fighting is still ongoing around Sirte and Bani Walid, where the pro-Gadhafi forces are making a stand.

Consequently, on September 21 NATO decided to extend its mission, Operation Unified Protector, for 90 days beyond the September 27 end date. Last week members of Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of continuing Canada's leadership role in that mission to protect Libyan civilians and help the Libyan transition to a post-Gadhafi era.

[Translation]

As the loyalist forces retreated over the summer, Canada has responded quickly with a number of steps to support the new Libya.

On August 25, Canada accredited the new Libyan chargé d'affaires appointed by the National Transitional Council (NTC) and committed to interact with the NTC as Lybia's government until an elected government is in place.

On September 1, Prime Minister Harper attended the Paris Friends of Libya Conference where he met with the chair of the executive board of the NTC, Mahmud Jibril, and informed him directly of the lifting of Canada's unilateral sanctions imposed on the Libyan government under the Special Economic Measures Act.

[English]

At the same time, Canada approached the United Nations for approval to make available to the Libyan authorities funds frozen under United Nations resolutions 1970 and 1973. After receiving the necessary approvals from the UN's sanctions committee, Minister Baird announced on September 13 that Canada would be unfreezing all Libyan assets held in Canada and Canadian institutions. This was worth approximately \$2.2 billion.

The unfreezing is a complicated process because the funds are held in the U.K. branches of Canadian banks and are denominated in U.S. dollars. However, the steps necessary to release the funds are largely complete, and we are in discussions with the National Transitional Council about where they wish the funds to be directed.

Most recently, on September 20 the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in a high-level meeting on Libya in New York, which was hosted by the United Nations Secretary General. This meeting was to coordinate international assistance to the Libyan-led transition. Minister Baird met with Mr. Jibril again at that time to discuss Canada's involvement.

As you may know, on September 16 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2009, which establishes the United Nations support mission in Libya under the leadership of special representative of the Secretary General Ian Martin. The mission has been established for an initial three-month period to support Libyan efforts to, among other objectives, restore public security and order and promote the rule of law.

It also eased the sanctions imposed in UN Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973, including easing the arms embargo to allow importation of items intended for security and disarmament assistance to the Libyan authorities, as well as of small arms and light weapons for the use of UN personnel, media, and development workers.

• (0855)

[*Translation*]

We are currently examining ways of supporting Libya's transition through targeted stabilization assistance. Consultations are under way with the UN and with the NTC to ensure that Canada's contribution is coordinated with international partners and responds to the needs identified by the Libyans themselves. Canada will align its support and assistance within the framework agreed with the NTC.

We have identified four areas where we believe we could have significant value added and will be developing programming: first, good governance and institution building; second, security and rule of law; third, economic development; and four, human rights and the role of women.

[*English*]

The UN will be leading a series of seven post-conflict needs assessment missions. Canada has expressed an interest in participating in a number of them, in particular those regarding public security and rule of law; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; and possibly, electoral and constitutional needs.

In addition to the support for Libya and the implementation of the UN resolutions, the government is also working to return full services to Canadians in Libya through our embassy in Tripoli, including support for Canadian companies. On September 13, following an assessment mission undertaken in early September by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of National Defence, Minister Baird announced that Canada had re-established its diplomatic presence in Libya. This was six and a half months after evacuating all personnel and suspending operations. We deployed a skeleton team to liaise with the NTC and to prepare the way for more staff.

The embassy is currently operating from a temporary location while the chancery is restored for operations. There was no damage to the chancery, per se, but some work was needed and security measures had to be upgraded to enable operations to resume from that site.

The Canadian ambassador to Libya, Sandra McCardell, who I believe you've already met, has returned to Tripoli. As soon as an appropriate level of security is in place, the embassy will resume operations and will be able to provide services to Canadians.

Given Canada's role in liberating Libya and the ongoing need in Libya to restore the economy and to rebuild governance institutions for the new democratic Libya, the embassy complement will be expanded, at least for the immediate term. This will help to increase its capacity for political analysis, engagement with the NTC, and promotion of Canadian commercial interests.

Canadian officials are in regular contact with companies that were previously active in Libya or that have indicated an interest in becoming so to discuss how the Government of Canada can best support their interests.

[*Translation*]

Our embassy team in Tripoli has reported important changes on the ground. Traffic jams are back in Tripoli—a sign both that basic commodities like fuel are available and that people have the confidence to leave their homes. The overall atmosphere is almost festive, with the flags of the new Libya prominently displayed throughout the city, and children and adults alike dressed in T-shirts and ball caps of red, black and green stripes. Outside of specific areas where fierce fighting took place, such as Misrata, the infrastructure of Libya is largely intact.

• (0900)

[*English*]

In Tripoli, the precision of NATO strikes over the past months is evident. Some buildings are damaged, but little else. Libya is not a poor country. Its oil wealth is a foundation for the rebuilding that must take place. While there was some damage to oil facilities, repairs are already under way and production is being restored. It will take approximately a year for production to be restored to pre-revolution levels.

Despite these very positive signs, there are real challenges on the horizon. Many of the demands for a better quality of life that preceded the conflict—improved education, medical services, and employment—remain. Expectations for rapid improvement after four decades of stagnation are rising quickly.

The NTC, which has done a good job so far of maintaining order, is still in the process of restoring security forces and decommissioning various militias that had undertaken the fighting to free Libya. It's also in the difficult process of establishing an interim government. While it had ambitions of having this done last month, it has proven more challenging than anticipated. With Libya now free and with the shared goal of ridding the country of the Gadhafi regime, the NTC must develop cohesion among disparate political views and accommodate those with personal ambitions.

There have been ongoing efforts to broaden the membership of the executive council in order to make it more representative and inclusive; however, agreement has thus far proven elusive. Just yesterday the chairman of the NTC announced that its cabinet had been formed, but this was largely a confirmation of most of the individuals who had been in the previous cabinet.

According to local reporting and interviews with Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, the current chairman of the NTC, the formation of the new cabinet will now be postponed until after victory has been declared. Victory will likely be declared after the capture of Sirte and Bani Walid. Once this has happened, the current temporary government, the cabinet of which was just confirmed yesterday, will be dissolved and a new transitional government will be formed within a month.

In recent interviews Mr. Jalil has said that it is more important at this stage to have a competent cabinet that can quickly bring the country back to a more normal state. A representative cabinet will be formed after the elections are held. As the one current leader who seems to have the moral authority and leadership abilities that most Libyans seem to accept, his voice is probably the clearest indication of what shape the future political landscape will take.

[Translation]

Other challenges include ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law in a country that has little experience of democracy; reconciling diverse elements and preventing retaliatory attacks so that all find their future in the new Libya; and thirdly, gaining control of the many thousands of weapons now circulating in the country and the young men who carry them.

And of course, Gadhafi remains at large with an unknown degree of influence. These are significant hurdles to overcome. How these challenges are addressed will establish the country's path for the months and years to come.

[English]

In closing, I'd like to share that there's a good amount of good will toward Canada in Libya as a result of our decisive action within the NATO mission. The chairman of the NTC, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, in his first public address on his return to Tripoli thanked Canada specifically for its assistance. Given the overwhelming support in Parliament for Canada's continued participation in Operation Unified Protector, Canada will continue to play a key role in protecting civilians in Libya as the Libyan people work together to rebuild their new country.

The team and I would be very happy to respond to your questions.

• (0905)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Martin.

The NDP's going to start out.

Madame Laverdière.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Ms. Martin for her presentation and I thank all of you for being here this morning.

My first question concerns military activity. I would very much like to hear Brigadier-General King explain to us in more detail the activities being conducted by NATO at this time.

As a preamble, we know for instance that the Libyans are holding off on attacking Sirte themselves because there are still a lot of civilians within the city. Resistance forces now are really in urban

areas. There were also some brief reports in certain newspapers stating that civilians may have been killed by NATO forces, in Sirte in particular.

And so we would like to hear some further explanations on NATO activities at this time in the field.

BGen Craig King (Director General, Operations, Strategic Joint Staff, Department of National Defence): Thank you very much, madam. If you have no objection, I am going to reply in my mother tongue.

[English]

Thanks for your question. It's a good one.

We're closely monitoring the situation in Sirte right now. Sirte is a pivotal stronghold for the pro-regime forces. The fact that it's also Colonel Gadhafi's home town adds a certain symbolism to it.

The NATO activities have continued. We're continuing to operate under UN Security Council Resolution 1973, and most recently the resolution of 2009. So all the activities that are being undertaken by NATO and by Canadian Forces in support of the NATO mission are to protect the civilians. Accordingly, the level of military activity has been tailored to the situation around Sirte.

You are right to point out that it's an urban environment and in that environment it's extremely difficult for pilots to operate and to distinguish targets. Extra care is being applied to avoid the scenario you described.

With respect to the situation on the ground, there has been a management of the NATO air strike campaign, and the campaign has been tailored back. So it's been scaled appropriately to make sure that whatever NATO is doing there is in support of the mandate.

I can tell you that the situation is being monitored closely, and that the force being applied by NATO and Canadian Forces is in support of the mandate that we've been operating under from the start. But you're right, it is a much more difficult environment within which to operate.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you for this answer.

Is there still bombing going on in Bani Walid and in Sirte? In Sirte, is there bombing going on around the city but also in the city?

Thank you.

BGen Craig King: The situation is being managed by the commander on the ground. So where the pockets of resistance are—Bani Walid and Sirte—and where those civilian populations have been threatened, force has been applied.

Given the situation on the ground, the commander will apply a level of force appropriate to the situation, so it changes regularly. You can appreciate that the fighting right now is in a very fluid state. I can tell you that force has been applied in the vicinity of Sirte and Bani Walid, but where pockets of resistance exist within that city—and we are talking about two major pockets of resistance in Sirte—the report I just read this morning had the southernmost pocket in the hands of the anti-Gadhafi forces. So where that has occurred there is probably not going to be as much of an effort applied.

There is still the application of force, but I have to tell you that it changes on a frequent basis, given the fluid nature of the situation on the ground.

• (0910)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you very much. I know I only have a few minutes left, but we can come back to that.

I understand that there will be a mission to assess on-the-ground needs for the reconstruction of Libya. I would like Ms. Gervais-Vidricaire to give us a broad outline of what Canada can contribute to that.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire (Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you for your question.

Indeed, there will be several needs assessment missions. The international community has agreed that these missions be coordinated in large measure by the United Nations. There are several of them. In fact, there are ten, seven of which are being coordinated by the United Nations.

As we said previously, the United Nations has opened an office in Tripoli. However, finding the proper people to talk to constitutes a real challenge for the people on the ground, because determining their needs must of course be done in very close cooperation and consultation with the Libyans themselves.

In light of the situation which prevailed until yesterday when the cabinet was reconfirmed, it was apparently very difficult to find the proper interlocutors. We hope the situation will improve.

Canada hopes to be a part of some of these needs assessment missions. We expressed particular interest in the mission that will be focusing on public safety and rule of law issues, as well as on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

In fact, our Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force—the START—will as of next week send an agent who will be on site and provide liaison with the on-site United Nations office and other partners. I think that will be very useful.

We had hoped that these assessment missions would submit their conclusions around the end of September or the beginning of October. However, I think that they will need a little more time.

However, some needs that are already quite obvious have been identified by the Libyans, such as the need for mine clearance, and what to do with unexploded bombs and ammunition, which remain a threat.

The United Nations demining services are examining the issue. Since this is a very urgent need they are looking at this very closely because this is something that could perhaps be done relatively quickly.

Overall, I think that the operative rule is to favour coordination with the international community through the United Nations and close cooperation with the Libyans. As long as they have not clearly determined what they would like the international community to do, we will have to be patient.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to now move to Ms. Brown. The floor is yours.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for being here this morning. I think this is quite timely for us to be hearing from you.

I'd like to turn to CIDA, because I think that's been a very important part of what Canada has done there. Canada responded as soon as we knew that there was turmoil; we got involved right away. I wonder if you could give us a little bit of history of how we got involved with the situation there. What are the current needs? Is there something for Canada in the future in terms of continuing our assistance?

I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to meet with people from the Red Cross, as you know, and we had some conversations about that. They were telling me about some of the things they've been involved with, but I wonder if you could tell us about the partners we're working with and how effective that has been on the ground.

I'm just going to turn it over to you, because I'm sure you can give us lots of information.

• (0915)

Ms. Leslie Norton (Director General, International Humanitarian Assistance Directorate, Canadian International Development Agency): Thanks very much for the question.

I'll share the response with my colleague from the bilateral program, if I may, but I'll begin by saying that I think many of us are aware that in many of the conflict-affected parts of Libya there is a lot of stability right now. On the humanitarian front, Libya is stabilizing, and a lot of our humanitarian partners are starting to think toward closing down their humanitarian response and turning to reconstruction or early recovery and reconstruction. That's the first part.

Canada was there during that humanitarian response phase, was one of the first donors to respond to the UN and the Red Cross appeals. We responded within the total of \$10.6 million. Our partners included the variety of the partners within the UN itself, from the World Food Program to UNHCR—the UN High Commissioner for Refugees—and IOM, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Canadian Red Cross.

As we all know, at the outset of the conflict many folks moved. There was lots of movement, a lot of displaced people both within the country as well as outside the country. For the folks who moved outside the country, it was predominantly UNHCR and IOM that were taking care of them, and many of the third-country nationals were returned to their countries of origin.

In-country currently, a fair number of displaced people remain. The totals are estimated at between 100,000 and 150,000. That brings me to Bani Walid and Sirte. In Bani Walid alone, we estimate that there are about 40,000 displaced people. We have reports from the ICRC from the weekend. They had managed to get into Sirte for a first mission, and we understand from the media reports, which I think we're all party to, that they attempted a second visit and assessment, but they were not able to do it because of the violence.

They visited the hospital to do an assessment of what the requirements were, and they found, of course, the need for oxygen and fuel within the hospital itself. There are a lot of people who have been affected by the current besieging of the city and they're in desperate need of medical aid. We understand that there are thousands of civilians also streaming out of Sirte. We also understand that the UN is trying to prepare.... Stockpile is perhaps not the correct term, but they're bringing the assistance in and around the city in anticipation of the movement of people outside the city.

So that's the current context. The remaining humanitarian needs are very localized, and the partners that CIDA Canada has financed are in fact there and they continue to be there very actively. Primarily it is the ICRC within the context of Sirte and Bani Walid, but also UNICEF has been, I understand, distributing water to those who have left Bani Walid.

With the stabilization of the humanitarian situation throughout the country, in some the humanitarian response will be decreasing as the early recovery and reconstruction elements start to pick up speed.

At this point I'll turn to my colleague, Vincent LePape, to speak about the longer-term nature of CIDA's involvement.

Mr. Vincent LePape (Director, North Africa and Middle East, Canadian International Development Agency): Thank you for your question.

To date we do not have a bilateral program in Libya and CIDA has not funded any development assistance projects. As my colleague mentioned, CIDA support was limited to humanitarian assistance.

For the future we are awaiting the outcome of the Libyan stabilization team assessment—all the assessments that were mentioned by my colleagues—to see what the needs are for the future, because now it's still very unclear. So DFAIT is participating in this assessment, and CIDA is closely monitoring the file. At this point we are waiting for the outcome of the assessment.

Thank you.

• (0920)

Ms. Lois Brown: Can you give us any indication of the status of Libya's ability to create their own food supply? Was Libya self-sufficient in the past? They have many resources. As we are putting the money back into unfreezing all of those assets, they will have access to their own funding, but what is the ability of Libya to produce its own food, or its own food chain? Do we have any idea how long it will take them to re-establish those connections if they've been lost, or to get back to their own food production?

Mr. Vincent LePape: Thank you for the question.

In fact, Libya is a relatively rich country and is not dependent on development assistance. Therefore, I guess its reconstruction and its

future must be led and funded largely by the Libyan people themselves. There are various reports on the timing under which it will be able to get back to the level of production for oil revenue, for example, but there will be a stabilization period and a time during which they may need assistance. But in the long run, it's clear that the Libyan people will have their own resources.

Ms. Leslie Norton: If I may simply complement that, currently in the UN plan they do outline food insecurity as one of the current challenges, so in fact you're bang-on on that question. I think Libya has a history of being a food importer, and the fact that it is rich in resources has enabled it to manage its own food security issues. The issue of production is one thing, but it's really the ability to have the resources to continue to import in the future.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Eyking.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, and I thank the witnesses for coming here today and giving us this brief.

My question is more on the democratic institutions in this country and how we're going to be able to help them to go through this process.

When the Iron Curtain came down in Berlin, twenty-some years ago, these former East Bloc countries needed to learn how to go through this whole process after being under communism, so a lot of the assistance that not only the European Union gave to them, we gave to them—everything from training, their elections, governance, judicial systems, military restrictions, the whole thing.

I visited Poland to open up their stock exchange, and they told me they took a lot of the things that Canada does and they used them. They used part of our Constitution, they used our charter of rights. I see the same thing unfolding here as we deal with the NTC.

I guess my question is, what is our game plan? Is Canada going to be working with other countries, similar to what we did in the East Bloc countries? One would think it would be easier, because you're only dealing with one country, but I think it's probably more complicated because of the whole make-up of this country, especially dealing with the military. So what is the game plan in a little more detail? How are we going to go in there and deal with them and show them the way? Will we be bringing some of their people here to Canada to go through that whole institutional process for democratic reform?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Perhaps I might start in response to your question, and then I'll turn it over to Ms. Gervais-Vidricaire to add in the details.

Unlike the East Bloc countries, Libya was not a closed society, and many Libyans who went back to participate in the revolution have had extensive experience in western countries. Mr. Jalil himself is a lawyer with extensive experience in the western world as well. So they don't have such a great deficit of capacity within the country itself.

That said, the reconstitution of democratic institutions and the economic institutions as well, in terms of a more open model, an economic environment that is not under the central control of the Gadhafi regime and his associates, but rather operates more on market principles, are elements where Libya will need some expert technical assistance and advice. It is one of the four priority areas that Canada has identified where we would be able to provide a certain amount of assistance, based on our experience in eastern Europe but also in other countries that are undergoing major transitions as well.

• (0925)

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Yes, to complement what has been said, certainly democratization will be quite a challenge and one to which we should be able to contribute positively.

One of the assessment missions led by the United Nations will have to do with the electoral and constitutional processes, so we will see what is required. I think the purpose of the assessment mission is to organize a division of labour at some point, so that countries interested in making a positive contribution, like Canada, will be able to do their share while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

It's worth mentioning, of course, that at the government level we want to do our share and we want to do it right. I know for a fact that some Canadian NGOs—and I have in mind, for example, Rights and Democracy—are already quite interested. Of course, they have lots of experience in the area of democracy, democratization, electoral processes, and so forth. There will be a number of actors involved. It's important that governments do their part, but the role of civil society NGOs is very important as well.

At this point in time it's difficult to tell you exactly what we're going to do because we don't have the results of the assessment mission.

Hon. Mark Eyking: It takes more than one person to make this evolve. You're talking about the one leader, but you want, really, the population as a whole....

Is there any thought on what kind of system would be set up there? Would it be a parliamentary system? Would it be similar to the United States? Is anybody talking about what's going to be set up? I'm sure right now they don't have too many MPs and things floating around. So what do you see there?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: The National Transitional Council had issued a draft constitutional declaration last summer. It maps out some of the framework elements. They envisage a presidential system and also a multi-party system. The exact composition of their parliament, or congress, or whatever they choose to call it, has not yet been determined. One of the critical functions of the transitional government when it is appointed will be to set up a constitutional commission that will then map out exactly how they will choose to govern themselves as they go forward.

It will be an important debate in Libya. Competing visions will need to be reconciled. There are also regional differences that need to be reconciled and accommodated. The revolution began in Benghazi, which is in the western part of the country, and moved towards Tripoli in the eastern part of the country, which is the most populous part of the country. Those who initiated this process are not representative of the entire country, so a significant process of

reconciliation will need to be undertaken. I think this was reflected in the challenge of appointing an interim cabinet and why it was delayed to allow some behind-the-scenes discussions to determine the way forward.

Hon. Mark Eyking: You know what happened in Yemen. Yemen has a parliamentary system, but you have two factions and they just can't seem to.... You could also have that in Libya.

My time's up? Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

That ends the first round. We'll move into our second round, which will be five minutes for questions and answers.

We'll start with Mr. Dechert.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your appearance here today.

I'd like to start with Ms. Martin if I may and just refer to a media report this past weekend that a Turkish airline plane has landed in Tripoli, restoring some international commercial flights to Tripoli. I wonder if you can update us on Canada's travel warnings to Canadian citizens who may be interested in travelling to Libya.

• (0930)

Mrs. Barbara Martin: We noticed the announcement by the Turkish airlines flight as well. Indeed, Turkish Airways announced a resumption of their service to Libya. In actual fact, they posted a great number of flights, the majority of which were cancelled in the end. It is a good sign that they were able to send in one airplane; however, in a conversation I had with the field yesterday, there is still the general sense that the airports are not yet safe for commercial aircraft. They're working rapidly to change that circumstance.

The other point that's quite relevant is that conditions across Libya vary from place to place and region to region on where it might be safe for people to go if they have essential business in Libya. It might be true of some places but not all places. About a week ago we revised our travel advisory. It had said that Canadians should avoid all travel to Libya and should leave if they are able to. The revision advised against all travel except for Tripoli and the Benghazi area, for which we advise against non-essential travel. It is a slight easing of that travel restriction that very much reflects the increased stability in Tripoli and the Benghazi area. This is consistent with what a number of our key allies are also doing and recommending to their citizens.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Thank you very much for that update.

In your opening remarks you mentioned four areas of potential assistance by Canada to Libya. Two of those areas were security and the rule of law, and human rights and the role of women. Could you elaborate a little for us on what you envision Canada's role to be in each of those areas? What kinds of programs can we provide that will benefit Libya?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: Again, we will see what the exact needs are. For example, if there is a need for police training, we have the Canadian police arrangement that allows us to deploy some police officers. We could do it in Libya if there's a need. That would be a very concrete and practical contribution. We will see, in coordination with the UN and our partners, what needs to be done and who is best placed to do it.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Regarding human rights and the role of women, what do you envision?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: It would be capacity-building, reinforcement, or creation of institutions that can help protect human rights. Media training at some point will also be important, especially in the lead-up to an eventual election. There are a number of areas where capacity-building and training would be the thing to do.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Thank you.

In our last meeting on the mission in Libya, there was some discussion about the role that other countries in the region are playing in the transition. Mrs. Martin, could you update us on what other regional neighbours are contributing to the situation in Libya?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Thank you.

Of course, the region itself is undergoing a massive transition. Tunisia was the country where the whole Arab awakening, as we now like to call it, began. Tunisia itself, of course, is working toward the development of a constituent assembly to determine its own constitution as it looks forward. Elections to that assembly will take place later this month.

Egypt, its neighbour on the other side, is also undergoing a massive reform program, a social upheaval that resulted in the removal of President Mubarak and now his trial for the acts he committed. The process there is progressing, I would say, with a few bumps in the road, as frankly could be expected. We experienced the same thing with countries in eastern Europe. It takes a long time to actually rebuild a new institutional and democratic culture within countries undergoing this sort of transition.

Algeria, which hasn't undergone as dramatic a reform process as have others, is nonetheless looking at a certain level of reform within its own environment.

Those are the countries that border Libya on the horizontal plane. Basically, their contributions are in the sense that they too are undergoing these processes, from the deposition of the existing regime to the rebuilding of a new country.

The countries to the south—Chad, Niger, and Sudan—are Saharan countries predominantly, and they have challenges of their own. No doubt you've read reports of members of the Gadhafi family who may have fled across the border into Niger, and the Nigerians seem to be mindful of obligations with respect to the International Criminal Court among others in their management of that. That too is a contribution to this overall effort.

As I said in my opening remarks, Moammar Gadhafi remains at large. We don't know where he is. We don't know what his influence is, and we suspect he has considerable resources at his disposal.

There remains a huge question as to where he may attempt to flee to and what assistance might be given by those neighbours.

To my knowledge, Chad hasn't had a major engagement in this process at all. Of course Sudan faces enormous challenges of its own with its recent separation into two countries. It has also experienced an increase in fighting.

In summation, I think the major contribution is that these are all countries facing common challenges from similar but not identical situations, and no doubt there is a degree of comparing of notes.

I would say there are two international processes under way. One is the Deauville Partnership, which was launched by the French presidency at their summit in Deauville and at a meeting held in Paris of that body called the Friends of Libya. A subsequent meeting was held in New York to look at how countries could assist these countries. They are all members of this partnership, so in that sense they engage as equals in a discussion on the way forward.

The second process is the broader Middle East and North Africa initiative, which is managed under the G-8 process.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Do I have more time?

• (0935)

The Chair: No, you took the next part of your time as well.

We're going to move to Ms. Sims for five minutes.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Thank you very much.

I really want to thank you for the information. I'm hearing very clearly that we're waiting for a strategic assessment to see what else we can do to help in the way of humanitarian aid.

Right now, according to the Red Cross, we have a very dire situation in Sirte and some of the other areas where hospitals don't have the necessary medication and don't have oxygen, and even though the Red Cross has been able to get through, carrying oxygen is dangerous, as far as I know.

I know we're engaged in getting some control on the military side to take over the two cities, which I suppose is a nice way of putting it. So what are we doing right now to address the very difficult humanitarian situation in some of these regions, especially in Sirte and the other military target for now?

I know we're doing one, so I need some information on what we're doing on the humanitarian side.

Ms. Leslie Norton: Thank you for your question.

It's difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance when bombs are dropping. That's something we are concerned about—the safety and security of humanitarian workers. They can move in only when the active conflict has stopped.

The ICRC made one foray into Sirte on October 1, and they were able to undertake a quick assessment. I understand *Médecins Sans Frontières*, or Doctors Without Borders, was also able to witness the situation. They were both reporting casualties, shrinking water supplies, lack of electricity, and lack of food. So, yes, there are definitely humanitarian needs.

Canada funded the ICRC to the tune of over \$3 million when the ICRC launched its appeal. They are one of our most important humanitarian partners. We have a core funding relationship with the ICRC, and they will come back to us and to their key donors if and when they require further assistance. But at this time, they haven't appealed for further assistance. That being said, the ICRC is there and is ready once the fighting stops.

Also, the UN, like Canada, is extremely concerned about the protection of civilians in the Bani Walid lead area as well as in Sirte. They have mobilized their humanitarian assistance, food, and medical supplies to the outskirts of both cities to be able to assist anyone able to leave. We understand that up to 40,000 internally displaced people have fled from Bani Walid, and they are being provided with assistance from the UN agencies posted on the outskirts. Unfortunately, it's one of these tough situations where the humanitarian workers want to go in and provide assistance, but they cannot do so when there is active fighting to the degree currently under way.

If it goes on for a long time, the ICRC will be in active discussions with the military with a view to their letting us know when there's a pause. Then we will go in and assist the people who need it. I understand that in the hospital there are casualties and the locals who are there have made folks aware of what the needs are. We are waiting to go in and address those needs.

• (0940)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: I appreciate that we don't want to send personnel in when their lives could be in danger. However, has NATO itself, our own forces, considered a ceasefire or a temporary respite so that humanitarian aid could go in? The reports from our own investigations and from what we're hearing are that the needs are very serious.

BGen Craig King: When the situation on the ground requires a suspension of the NATO effort, the commander who's directing the operation takes that decision, as he has done recently. Also, I would point out that the NTC, the anti-Gaddafi forces, have also put in place measures to pause the fighting to allow some of these activities to occur. As a matter of fact, over the course of the last month in a number of situations in Bani Walid and Sirte, there have been instances where ceasefires have occurred. Negotiations have been undertaken in an effort to resolve the situation with the least amount of suffering to the civilian population and the combatants. But as we've seen only too clearly, those efforts have not borne the fruit we expected to see. So it is a difficult environment. Measures have been taken, both on the NATO side and on the NTC side, to create the circumstances where humanitarian intervention can occur.

The Chair: Back over to the Conservatives and Mr. Dechert.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Ms. Martin, could you give us an update on the state of the Libyan economy? Is oil being exported? Is revenue flowing in? Where do you see the economy going over the next few months?

• (0945)

Mrs. Barbara Martin: I will preface my remarks with the fact that we have relatively little information on the state of the Libyan economy writ large. The IMF and the World Bank are doing some assessments, and those reports are going to be available imminently and will probably give us some information.

That said, we do know that oil production, which is the foundation of the Libyan economy, is progressively being restored. It's down to about a third of what the production levels were prior to the revolution. It is anticipated that it will take approximately a year to restore this oil production to previous levels.

The other sense we have of the Libyan economy is more anecdotal than analytical. It is based on the perceptions of the team we currently have in Libya. They are seeing activity. They are seeing goods flooding back into the shops and are seeing families shopping. The lines to get fuel are apparently the equivalent of the lines to get gas at the beginning of a long weekend in Canada. You can see confidence coming back.

Businesses, however, do need to get supply lines back into operation. The limitation on commercial transportation in and out of the country is still a constraint. There are land routes with Tunisia. The border with Tunisia opened about three or four weeks ago, which has allowed a tremendous number of goods to come into the country. It is a progressive situation.

Mr. Bob Dechert: You said that oil production is about one-third of the pre-revolution situation. Is that because infrastructure that has been destroyed needs to be replaced? Is there an opportunity for Canadian companies to participate in the reconstruction of those facilities?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: There is very limited damage to the infrastructure of the oil sector, and that damage is in the process of being repaired. That was one impact. The others are the supply links and the import and export ban on the movement of goods in and out of Libya. There is a process under way to lift the sanctions on Libya to allow the movement of goods back and forth. I believe that we will see a progressive increase as we go forward.

A number of Canadian companies were already engaged in the Libyan oil sector. They have expressed an interest in going back in. There are some potential newcomers among Canadian companies. We are providing information to them to see where they might be able to play a role going forward, not only in the oil sector but in other sectors of the Libyan economy.

It's not reconstruction as we knew it in the Balkans, where there had been extensive bombing and extensive bombing of civilian infrastructure. Most of the infrastructure is intact. It's responding to the ongoing development needs that had preceded this situation.

The Chair: There is one further comment. Go ahead, Mrs. Gervais-Vidricaire.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: I would like to add one point. Since last week we have had a Canadian lawyer at our embassy. His mission is a temporary mission to look at the legal environment for Canadian business, and business in general, with a view to providing advice to Canadian businesses on how they can reintegrate into the market, and for those Canadian companies that had contracts, on how they can be assured that the contracts will be respected.

The Chair: I'm going to wrap up your time.

The next round starts with Mr. Goldring. We're going to start the clock again for five minutes.

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

Thank you for appearing here today in town. Certainly, first and foremost, I would have to say a big congratulations to our military for a first-rate effort. It's marvellous to see how well represented Canada is on the world stage in dealing with scenarios such as this. It does our country very proud.

To comment on that, I have to say that this would be the first official action the Royal Canadian Air Force has had on the international military stage since perhaps the war in Korea. Would that be fair to say?

• (0950)

BGen Craig King: Well, sir, you'll recall we were involved in Kosovo as well.

Mr. Peter Goldring: The Royal Canadian Air Force.

BGen Craig King: The Royal Canadian Air Force—absolutely, sir.

Mr. Peter Goldring: The Royal Canadian Air Force, a little bit of a distinction here.

BGen Craig King: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Formerly being part of the Royal Canadian Air Force personnel myself, I'm a little sensitive to the terminology and the naming of it.

I have a question on the turnover of the seized assets. Have the seized assets been pretty well turned over and released so that the funds are available for any type of ongoing development? What are the constrictions still applying there? Are they available for the moving forward of the development?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: The short answer is yes. It is a complicated process, and what is happening now are discussions with the NTC as to what they want us to do with the funds. It is their money, and they need to tell us where they want us to put the money and when. Those discussions are ongoing at this time in terms of the actual disposition of the funds.

Mr. Peter Goldring: And is part of the complication going to be the development of the democratic institutions? Because understandably there were a lot of Canadian companies and Canadians working in Libya before, and that has been an ongoing scenario for many years. Is the new regime setting up democratic-type institutions? We're talking about Canada being involved, and maybe in some of the development processes of this. And is that inhibiting anything right now from moving forward? Or are the existing structures still workable?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Just very quickly, I'll say that the Central Bank of Libya still exists. It still functions relatively well. And it is at the discretion of the National Transitional Council, which we, as well as most other countries and members of the United Nations, have recognized as the legitimate authority in Libya.

So in the sense that yes, we are looking towards the development of democratic institutions, that process is not necessary for the NTC to have access to the funds. Right now they have the authority to tell us what they wish us to do with those funds.

Mr. Peter Goldring: And on the development of these democratic institutions, you had stated there is a discussion that will follow on it as to who takes part in what. Do we have any type of ongoing resident strategy with a process in mind of what we can

do? I understand that we as a committee did a study on international democracy development and some type of structuring that we would like to see on an ongoing basis for Canada to be involved in. And I would think this would fall right in with that type of mindset. And rather than waiting to have a negotiation internationally—who does what—do we have an in-house plan of action that we are proposing, being a major contributor in this area?

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: My answer to your last question would be no. We don't want to go ahead as Canada and do our own thing without consultation with our partners, without consultation with the United Nations.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Not without consultation, but—

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: No, but we have to see what the Libyans want and then we will see what Canada can best contribute. At this point in time we don't know exactly what is required, so it would be a bit premature to say “Okay, Canada will help you. We will do this.” But as soon as we see an opportunity, I think we have the capacity to respond fairly quickly, so that is good.

I would just add something to what you were saying about the institutions and in the area, for example, of banking. The World Bank is in charge of leading the needs assessment mission for everything that has to do with shared services, such as public financial management, budget preparation and execution, and banking. So that should be welcomed by the Libyans.

• (0955)

Mr. Peter Goldring: On the democratic development—

The Chair: Mr. Goldring, be very quick, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'm thinking of Haiti, where we were quite involved. Actually, Canada was doing the management of elections in Haiti and proposing that on the get-go.

The Chair: Thanks, Peter.

We're going to move over to Madame Ayala for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a few questions in mind.

Since Libya is not a signatory to the Rome Convention, could Gadhafi's collaborators and Gadhafi himself be judged by an international court? How will Gadhafi's collaborators be brought to justice, since the Libyan justice system has yet to be set up?

How will acts of vengeance be prevented, and how will combatants be disarmed? What are the challenges posed by the demobilization of the many rebel combatants and their integration into the regular armed forces, the police or simply civil society?

I have another very pertinent question. Libya is not an isolated country, it is not an island. How will we stabilize all of the Sahel-Saharan region so as to avoid seeing Libya sink once again into chaos?

According to the press, Ambassador Mohamed Loulichki pointed to the absence of transborder cooperation, the lack of security coordination, and to the convergence of various trafficking activities that make the Sahel-Saharan region a crisis point and a grey zone where collusion is taking place among these various non-state actors, arms dealers and terrorist movements such as al-Qaeda, in the Islamic Maghreb region. He believes that any sociopolitical imbalance will perturb the economic dynamics of the area sooner or later.

So what is there to do to fill the void created by Gadhafi's departure, in the sense that he was able to create a certain cohesion? What strategy should be adopted to compensate for the financial support Gadhafi offered his neighbours? We have to find a way of ensuring that there will be peace in the region.

Thank you.

[English]

Mrs. Barbara Martin: I'll ask our colleague from the legal side of the Department of National Defence to respond to the question on the Rome Convention, and then I can try to tackle the other questions you posed.

LCol Robin Holman (Assistant Deputy Judge Advocate General, Operations, Department of National Defence): It's important to understand or remember in all of these circumstances that to the extent that crimes are alleged to have been committed by people who are Libyan citizens or within Libyan territory, Libya as a sovereign country has the primary jurisdiction to deal with those offences. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in article 17, provides for complementary jurisdiction. The ICC only takes jurisdiction if a state that otherwise has jurisdiction is unable or unwilling to exercise that jurisdiction.

It's probably premature to talk about the ICC in this circumstance until the Libyan authorities, having gone through or going through whatever capacity restoration or development needs to be done, have the opportunity to exercise the jurisdiction that they have over Mr. Gadhafi and his cohorts.

Mrs. Barbara Martin: I might add to this that while I am not able to answer the legal intricacies of the statute of Rome and its relationship to the Libyan situation, the International Criminal Court has in fact issued a warrant for Gadhafi's arrest. The question is whether there will be an opportunity to actually exercise that warrant and bring him to justice through that process.

Concerning the legal intricacies that lie behind that, I'm afraid I would have to respond later. I could perhaps consult with colleagues in the department and get back to you on that.

You also asked about the challenges of demobilization within Libya, but also about Libya's situation within the region and the risks of a destabilized environment. You touched on the questions of terrorists and such forces operating through that area.

First of all, the demobilization is a challenge. The fight of the anti-Gadhafi forces was undertaken with various groups of militias who rose up and unified in order to push Gadhafi and his regime from the country. Right now there is the challenge of trying to recover the arms that are in the country.

A number of military bases were captured. The arms stores that were there were taken by various factions in the country, so the country is essentially awash in arms. It is a situation the National Transitional Council is enormously aware of and concerned about. It's one area in which we would be looking to see whether we can help, frankly.

With respect to the broader issue of terrorism through the region, Canada, like many other countries, has been concerned about this for some time. The Saharan region is a vast and unpopulated but also unpoliced region. In the course of recent years we have seen the rise of al-Qaeda in the Maghreb in that particular area. It is something on which we work with a number of countries throughout that region to develop programs that will make it less appealing for individuals to join these terrorist groups.

It's an ongoing struggle. Indeed, there is always the risk of destabilization through the region. But we are very hopeful, with the changes beginning in so many of these countries and the reforms to respond to the needs and the interests of the populations, that the appeal of terrorist groups and criminal groups will begin to diminish over time.

• (1000)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now move back to the other side of the table.

Mr. Schellenberger, I believe you had a quick question. Then Ms. Brown will finish it off.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Yes. I have a quick question.

Everything was under the Gadhafi regime. We talk about institutions such as the bank. I'm sure he had something to do with their national bank. There were really no institutions, as we know them here in Canada. I've been told that some African countries do not even have records of birth. Libya was not that backward. They do have birth records and the basics of institutions.

With these basics, it shouldn't be too difficult to help them establish democracy, because the basic records are there. Am I correct?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: I think you are actually correct. I will say that I have personally not had an opportunity to visit Libya so I can't speak from my personal sense of what is available in Libya. Indeed, the population is educated—not as educated as the Libyans themselves would like. They have functioning hospitals, they have had functioning institutions, they have had functioning banks, and the central bank has functioned.

The challenge they face is that these institutions have been dominated by a dictatorship. The problem they will face is how you restructure the functioning of those institutions to operate under more democratic, transparent lines, subject to market forces and not the control of the central authority; how you look at wealth distribution so that the wealth is not accumulating in the hands of the few but is distributed and used for the benefit of the country.

I wonder whether Marie wants to add something.

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: I would just add that at the recent meeting I attended, Ambassador McCardell commented on this issue, particularly in the legal area. She was saying you have a legal system, you have lawyers, the problem was the constant political interference in the legal process, not so much the lack of legal institutions.

• (1005)

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Speaking of Ms. McCardell, who was in to see us some months ago, I wonder if we could talk about our embassy in Libya. We've re-established our diplomatic relations with the country, so as things become more settled there we will see all of those functions of our embassy go back into play. Libya is a key geographic area in North Africa for us. Can you talk about what our embassy might look like in the future. Have we had any discussions about whether we're going to expand what we have there and what we offer to Libya? How soon do we expect that to be back in play? Could you comment on those?

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Happily.

Ambassador McCardell is not here because she's in Tripoli. That's a major step forward in terms of building up the strength of our embassy complement. I would start off by saying that we have re-established our diplomatic presence in Libya. We never actually broke off diplomatic relations with them through this situation. About two weeks ago we put in a very small team to prepare the way, to get our communications systems back up and running, and they are now back up and running. We have our direct telephone links back with them. Our secure computer systems are back functioning again and they are starting to operate out of our chancery building, which is where the embassy offices are actually located. They've been operating from a hotel for the last couple of weeks.

As we look forward, as Marie has mentioned, we've put out temporarily experts in legal contractual issues vis-à-vis business individuals. We have redeployed a trade commissioner into the embassy to help Canadian business people who may start to become interested in it. We are looking at deploying a political officer to help provide analysis of the situation in the country and we are in discussions about supplementary staff that could be useful to them. Primarily, we are seeking from Ambassador McCardell her advice on what she needs on the ground to be able to deliver what the government expects of her. So that's under way.

We will be doing this prudently, in that we do see an initial surge in the requirements at the embassy in Tripoli and we will do an assessment in the spring to determine what would be needed going forward after the summer. So we are calibrating our response in the context of the ongoing strategic review, which I'm sure you are aware of, to ensure that we do provide the necessary services but that they are done within the context of restraint that all government departments are currently facing.

The Chair: I'm going to turn it back over to the NDP and I believe Madame Laverdière and Mr. Morin are going to share their time together.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'll be very rapid, as I know my colleagues also have questions.

[*Translation*]

I'd like to get back to the military issue and ask Brigadier-General King to comment on the following question.

[*English*]

Isn't it true that if we have military action from the air basically bombing in an urban environment, we significantly increase the risk of civilian casualties while—excuse my expression—the return, what we can gain from it, is not that great, as those kinds of situations are usually resolved on the ground?

BGen Craig King: Thanks very much.

What you're referring to is the process of targeting that the military forces use in considering the application of force, irrespective of the environment in which it occurs. For security reasons, I will not go into the details of that process. But I will tell you that it is an elaborate process with a number of mechanisms to ensure that the damage on the ground is no more than is necessary to achieve the military objective, that it safeguards civilian life to the fullest extent possible, and that our military pilots, notwithstanding all of those mechanisms, at the end of the day provide the final safeguard in the application of force by deciding whether to expend their ordnance or not.

Through all of that process, I can say that the way we have prosecuted the campaign in support of the UN Security Council resolution has been with the a minimum amount of damage on the ground and loss of life among civilians.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): My question is addressed to Ms. Martin.

Libya is not a country known for its democratic system: it is a country that has a long history of tribal rivalries. What point have we reached when besieged people are ready to die? We see that the last rebels will be there making a stand until the very end. Generally, when we get to that point, it is because there is a political impasse. I wonder to what extent the tribal or ethnic component of the conflict has been assessed and studied. The roots of some situations may be even more remote.

Among other projects, Gadhafi had planned to build a 700-km pipeline in order to drain the water table in one part of the country and redirect it to another region, so as to develop agriculture; for this agricultural work he wanted to bring in 5 million workers from neighbouring countries. Now that the conflict has reached a near-final phase where everyone is going to die, shouldn't we ask ourselves whether the grievances of some of these people might be legitimate, whether they really fear for their lives or their long-term future?

[*English*]

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Thank you very much.

That's actually a very good question. It's also a difficult question to answer, because I think we have yet to see exactly how some rivalries or differences of view might play out in Libya.

You're absolutely right that there are different tribal groups, there are different ethnic groups, and there are different religious perspectives in the country as well. And there is an east-west divide, as I described earlier, between the Benghazi and the Tripoli areas. I think the challenges we've seen for the National Transitional Council to form a new cabinet have been in part a reflection of the challenges they face.

That said, thus far we are not seeing the tribal or ethnic issues emerging as predominant in the discussions. The issues are more around what the nature of the country going forward is going to be, to what extent groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood would find themselves represented within political structures as they go forward. Those are difficult issues for Libyans. It's clearly an Islamic state, but they are going to have to address exactly what is the colour and the nature of that state.

With respect to water, I think you may be referring to the great man-made river project, which is in fact under way. Elements of that provide water already to Tripoli and a number of major cities around Tripoli. It's a project that is still being completed, and there are more phases to be done. So clearly, negotiations have been under way to allow the pipeline to pass through different groups and parts of Libya.

If you would like, I would be very happy to provide further information to you later on that particular project.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin: The fact is that this water comes from a water table that goes back to a glacial period from millions of years ago. It could provide water to Libya for hundreds of years. According to Gadhafi's plan, that water would have been used for intensive agricultural production. It would then have been used up in 15 or 20 years. That is what I know about this. It could be one issue.

Mrs. Barbara Martin: I am not in a position to provide you with details on that project. I could perhaps send you that information in writing.

Mr. Marc-André Morin: Soon. Very well.

Mrs. Barbara Martin: Yes. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: To our witnesses, I want to thank DND, DFAIT, and CIDA for being here today.

I'm going to suspend the meeting so we can go in camera and get ready to discuss some future business.

Once again to our witnesses, thank you very much for taking time to be here this morning.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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