

be informed of proceedings at meetings which it does not attend? How necessary is it for U.N. Affairs staff to attend meetings personally, and what criteria should be applied?

(e) Consultation with Academia

The U.N. Affairs program seeks expertise on U.N. matters from outside of the government. One important source is university professors. At times they tend to be outspoken and critical, but they are very knowledgeable about government policy and the functioning of the U.N. Is the Department taking full advantage of this expertise? Aside from hiring university professors to fill gaps in staffing, is it possible to obtain more useful advice and information from university professors? What kinds of mechanisms could be instituted to facilitate this? And would stronger ties with academia be likely to result in other benefits?

(f) Promoting Public Understanding of the UN

The ultimate client of the United Nations Affairs program is the Canadian public. Yet the general public has virtually no involvement in policy development, and likely has very little information about the role and benefits of the U.N., or about Canada's contribution or positions it adopts. There is concern that the public's opinion is guided mainly by news, too often originating from sources other than Canadian, of dramatic U.N. failures and of Canada's large financial contributions. Neither the media nor Members of Parliament seem to present the U.N. in a particularly favourable fashion. There are a number of reasons for this: the Canadian media do not maintain permanent correspondents at U.N. Headquarters; by and large, MPs do not understand the Organization's purpose or how it works.* Should (and could) the program use the media and Members of Parliament, especially those who have been sent to the UN's General Assembly as observers, to promote a better understanding of the U.N. among Canadians? How?

(g) Role of Provincial Governments

The government appears to be encouraging a policy of greater consultation between itself and provincial

* There are, of course, exceptions.