

make these statements or motions is because sometimes they have developed more into partisan wrangling rather than a serious examination of the foreign policy issues. I've said that in the House of Commons so I don't feel apologetic about saying it before this non partisan audience. But I think there is something that we can do there to increase the awareness through the revival, under proper understandings, of the practice of Government statements on motions.

The role of parliamentary committees is a complex subject to which you are devoting an entire panel. The Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs is now occupied with the Middle East and North Africa. SCEAND has been at work on estimates and a variety of matters. Without wishing to intrude on the responsibility of SCEAND members for their work program, I would repeat the Government's willingness to cooperate in a reference on East-West Relations, security, disarmament and peacekeeping. Nor do I believe that this would exhaust the topics which might deserve attention, either through a separate reference or under the Committee's mandate to examine the annual report of the Department of External Affairs. Some examples might include Canada's evolving relationship with the USA, relations with ASEAN, Japan, and other Pacific Rim states; the current challenge to multilateralism symbolized by the U.S. attitude toward UNESCO; interdependence and Canadian competitiveness; and the aid/trade relationship. Each of these is a current question. All of them couldn't be examined by the Committee, but there are some subjects that come to mind.

Of course, decisions about such studies raise the question of timing. Clearly, the parliamentary committees can have their greatest influence on policy if studies bear some relation to the Government's decision-making timetable. At the moment, Government departments go through a variety of internal planning exercises to identify the international framework for upcoming decisions. These efforts also serve as guidance to cabinet. I would be quite prepared to discuss with the steering committee of SCEAND and the Senate Committee whether the Government might systematically provide analyses of the international scene and a more precise indication of its planning schedule. The form and timing of such guidance would be for discussion, but the general objective would be to stimulate timely and focused input from Parliament.

Well these are some ideas that come to mind as I attempt to focus on the relationship between the Government and Parliament. I can assure you that ideas and suggestions which would enhance the role of Parliament while respecting the Government's responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs will receive close attention.