

DOC
CA1
EA
2005E92
ENG

DOCS
CA1 EA 2005E92 ENG
Government response to the Report
of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs and International
Trade : exploring Canada's
16815975(E)
.B3740948(E)

DOC
.b3740948(E)

Canada

Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade
(Foreign Affairs)

Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international
(Affaires étrangères)

DOC
CA1
EA
2005E92
ENG

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Exploring Canada's Relations with the Countries of the Muslim World

15815 975

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

JUN 14 2005

Return to Departmental Library
Retourner à la bibliothèque du Ministère

March 2005

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
RECOMMENDATION 1	3
RECOMMENDATION 2	4
RECOMMENDATION 3	5
RECOMMENDATION 4	7
RECOMMENDATION 5	8
RECOMMENDATION 6	9
RECOMMENDATION 7	10
RECOMMENDATION 8	10
RECOMMENDATION 9	11
RECOMMENDATION 10	12
RECOMMENDATION 11	13
RECOMMENDATION 12	13
RECOMMENDATION 13	14
RECOMMENDATION 14	15
RECOMMENDATION 15	16
RECOMMENDATION 16	18
RECOMMENDATION 17	19
RECOMMENDATION 18	21
RECOMMENDATION 19	21
RECOMMENDATION 20	22
RECOMMENDATION 21	22
RECOMMENDATION 22	24
RECOMMENDATION 23	24
RECOMMENDATION 24	25
RECOMMENDATION 25	25
RECOMMENDATION 26	26
RECOMMENDATION 27	27
RECOMMENDATION 28	28
RECOMMENDATION 29	29
RECOMMENDATION 30	29

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Introduction

The Government would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade for their work on their report entitled Exploring Canada's Relations with the Countries of the Muslim World.

Events over the past three years have brought home a sobering fact: we cannot continue to enjoy security and prosperity at home, in the West, without regard for the state of the rest of the world. If free markets, democratic values, and pluralist societies are our strength, sharing in their benefits must also be the hope which lifts the rest of the world. By helping these societies become more prosperous, better governed, and better informed, we increase the chances for collective sustained security and prosperity.

Many leaders of Muslim countries have identified good governance and economic development as key to their prosperity, and they are reaching out to others for partnership. When working with those societies, we need to think and act decisively and creatively. Most importantly, we need to work in partnership with the overwhelming majority of citizens, be they Muslims or from various minorities who want to share the fruits of democracy, human rights protection, free markets and education. The Government will work not only with governments, but also with NGOs and civil society, including minorities. Canada, as a pluralist, tolerant and open society which respects Islam and appreciates the contribution Muslim civilisation has made to the West's own development, can be a valued partner.

Most of the G8 and other allies have begun to look at how to manage their relations with the Muslim World. At the heart of the matter is how best to address immediate concerns while also addressing the inequitable conditions that separate the West and developing countries. Although religion is a factor in these countries, it is only one element of the context in which inequitable conditions occur, and should not be considered as a causal factor. The Committee stresses, and the Government agrees, that Canada must avoid a confrontational approach. Islam upholds pluralism, including the liberal-democratic precepts of equal rights for women and minorities. However, there are significant differences in the political systems of the 50-odd countries of the Muslim world, precluding the development of a single policy to cover all of them.

The Government agrees with the three main areas of action proposed by the Committee. Our policies towards countries of the Muslim world will continue to be informed by, but not limited to, the substance of most of the recommendations of the report. The guiding principle will be a focus on issues of governance when considering program or policy initiatives in this area. First, the Government, particularly Foreign Affairs Canada, will increase its capacity to understand and enhance Canada's relations with Muslim countries. Second, Canada will use its strengths to develop partnerships with countries of the Muslim world focussing on good governance, human rights, democratic participation and economic development in response to needs identified by these partners. These goals will be important in improving many of the conditions that incubate extremism. Third, the Government will take steps to improve mutual understanding between Canada and the countries of the Muslim world, through more exchange and dialogue, including through enhanced public diplomacy efforts to be led by Foreign Affairs Canada.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Government has been working in most of the areas identified in the Report. As well, the Government has established a Working Group on this issue. The FAC Departmental Working Group on Relations with Muslim Communities has been tasked to work on the issues contained in the Government's Response and to serve as a focal point within Foreign Affairs Canada for cross-cutting issues dealing with relations with Muslim communities and for discussions and management of issues relevant to Islam in Canada and in our relations with other countries.

There are no funding implications at this time as all activities are covered under existing budgets.

Now more than ever, relations with the Muslim world are important to Canada's security and prosperity. The Government therefore appreciates the careful work the Committee has undertaken to study this matter, and formulate the broad range of recommendations included in its report.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada should explicitly recognize relations with the countries of the Muslim world as an important area of foreign policy attention and strategic planning. In addition, the Government should use the forthcoming international policy review as a means to deepen Canadian public engagement on issues of foreign policy development involving Muslim communities in Canada and relations with Muslim countries.

The Government recognises relations with the countries of the Muslim world as an important issue which warrants heightened foreign policy attention. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, comprising 1.4 billion Muslims. Together, these individuals constitute majorities in nearly 50 countries. Moreover, Canada now has over 600,000 Muslim Canadians, which represents a 130% increase in 10 years.

The Government has already taken action which supports the Committee's recommendations, including the support of a visit of McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies' Dr. Turgay to South and Southeast Asia to report on developing dialogue with Muslim communities; a conference at McGill entitled "Canada and Islam in the 21st Century", including participants from 11 countries; and an Asian Journalists Study Tour of Canada, including participants from seven countries. As well, the Government has established a Working Group on this subject. The FAC Departmental Working Group on Relations with Muslim Communities (WGMC) initial objectives are to work on the issues contained in the Government's Response and to serve as a focal point within the Department of Foreign Affairs for cross-cutting issues dealing with relations with Muslim communities and for discussions and management of issues relevant to Islam in Canada and in our relations with other countries. This group will also explore ways to involve Muslim communities in Canada in its work. Finally, noting the importance of bolstering our understanding and engagement with the Muslim world, the Government established the Cross-Cultural Roundtable as part of the April 2004 National Security Policy. The Roundtable will engage in a long-term dialogue on matters related to national security as they impact a diverse and pluralistic society.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Regarding the International Policy Review, the recommendations of the Standing Committee have been taken into consideration and are reflected in several elements of the Review, and the Committee's Report is also specifically cited in the text.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada should strengthen the analytical and diplomatic capacities required to be effective in enhancing Canada's relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

The newly established Working Group on Canada's Relations with Muslim Communities is examining how Canada can enhance its engagement with Muslim communities around the world. Concrete recommendations derived from the Working Group's deliberations will serve to better inform Canadian diplomatic efforts in predominately Muslim countries. Such recommendations will form the basis of a guide for Canadian missions abroad, with a view to ensuring a consistency of approach while allowing for country-specific considerations.

In addition, the Working Group is exploring the possibility of creating a training course in cooperation with the Canadian Foreign Service Institute intended to enhance Canadian knowledge of and appreciation for Muslim history and culture. This course will be aimed at officials active on bilateral and multilateral issues dealing with Canada's relations with predominately Muslim countries. Such training can help officials to better understand the contexts in which they will be operating abroad as well as domestic implications.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada must ensure a proper understanding of the complexities of the diverse countries of the Muslim world and develop a constructive long-term approach toward them. In particular, the Committee is convinced that there cannot be genuine democratic progress without a serious process of increasing equality for women - economic, social, and political equality - in law and in practice.

As part of this constructive approach, the Government should:

- **ensure full consultation with a broad range of groups, including Muslim groups, in the ongoing development of its foreign policy;**
- **place greater emphasis on generation and communication of knowledge at home and abroad; support secular education abroad which upholds human rights and individual freedoms; and, noting the example of McGill University's successful program in Indonesia, in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, encourage other Canadian educational institutions to establish similar programs in Muslim countries;**
- **continue to support intercultural and interfaith dialogue;**
- **in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, expand student and other exchange programs;**
- **emphasize values such as pluralism and multiculturalism, and encourage the adoption of universal human rights values and freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, association, enterprise and ownership of property;**
- **continue to support civil society and democratization throughout the Muslim world and elsewhere;**
- **continue to strongly condemn all human rights abuses;**
- **place even greater emphasis on the need for gender equality and women's rights;**
- **speak out strongly in defence of minority rights, including minority religious communities, and encourage their full participation in the national affairs of their countries;**
- **aggressive strategy for the protection of Canadians detained abroad;**
- **strongly consider supporting the idea of establishing a Canadian news service televised by satellite; and**

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- **ensure adequate resources for enhanced linguistic and analysis capabilities within the Canadian government, and consider the establishment of a mechanism within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to coordinate dialogue activities with the countries of the Muslim world.**

The recently-established Working Group on Canada's Relation with Muslim Communities is also considering tools to mainstream its eventual recommendations in the way the Government manages its relations with regions and countries of predominantly Muslim populations.

Canada monitors human rights around the world and expresses its concerns at all appropriate opportunities with respect to human rights violations. We raise our concerns through various methods such as including through interventions by our missions abroad, visits with human rights defenders, attendance at trials and other court appearances, and collaboration with like-minded missions in raising human rights issues with affected governments. Recent examples include active Canadian engagement on both Sudan and the Kazemi case, where the Government is working to draw international attention to the serious human rights violations in Darfur and Iran respectively.

Canada actively pursues progress on human rights issues in multilateral fora, including the United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as well as at regional and international conferences dedicated to preventing discrimination and enhancing security. Domestically, the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act promotes the goal of encouraging Canadians to retain their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging. Canada presents this as an example of best practice in its bilateral contacts with other countries.

Canada's human rights priorities include assisting states, and international and non-governmental organizations to promote and protect human rights, including gender equity, and to advance humanitarian action. Canada is an active advocate of the need to protect human rights while enhancing security, an agenda of significant importance post 9/11. This is achieved through technical cooperation to reinforce local capacity to monitor and combat human rights abuses. Canadian embassies abroad support the work of local human rights organizations. Canada works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other UN agencies, to promote progress in the area of human rights field operations.

The Government views the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality as essential to achieving progress on human rights and democratic development. Canada has taken a leading role in ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation in conflict prevention and peace building efforts. Most recently, the Government has been focussed on the establishment and implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In 2001, the Government supported the establishment of the Canadian Committee on Women, Peace and Security, a unique consortium of Government, Parliamentarians, academics and civil society representatives.

The provision of effective support and protection for Canadians travelling and living abroad is of the highest priority to the Government. We will continue to urge all countries to respect

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

International Human Rights law including provisions that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture). Ministers, officials and others have spoken publicly on this matter on numerous occasions and will continue to do so.

However, there are limitations to the assistance which any government can provide its citizens abroad. Travellers should be well aware of the political, legal and security structures of the countries which they visit. Regularly updated travel reports will continue to advise Canadians of the risks associated with travel to potentially hazardous areas.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Canada should encourage the Government of Turkey to be a voice of democracy and moderation within the Muslim world and to continue to implement democratic and human rights reforms, including respecting the rights of its Kurdish minority, in compliance with Turkey's international obligations and aspirations to join the European Union.

In seeking membership in the European Union, Turkey continues to institute a massive program of political, economic, social and judicial reforms to align itself with European laws and practices including broadcasting and schooling in the mother tongue of its citizens of Kurdish origin. Canada continues to encourage Turkey in such reform efforts. Given its geostrategic location and historic links, major reforms being instituted in Turkey are having an impact beyond its borders, including in States in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Canada-Turkey cooperation on good governance has focussed on community policing training, among other areas. Further to a Canada-Turkey Memorandum of Understanding on Police Cooperation signed in August 1999 and capitalising on Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal expertise, the Government successfully organised training sessions in both Canada and Turkey for more than 300 Turkish police instructors between 1999-2004. This training emphasised respect of individual and basic human rights. As a result, Turkish police have adopted many Canadian practices in such areas as basic recruit training, forensic interviewing, hostage negotiation, cyber crime, and crime scene management and are now offering Turkish police training to neighbouring states.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada should explore ways to facilitate further contacts with Turkey both at the official level and through private sector, civil society, educational and cultural connections. Consideration should be given to inviting Prime Minister Recep Erdogan to visit Canada and to address Parliament on, among other matters, strengthening ties with countries of the Muslim world.

A broad spectrum of constructive official and private contacts between Canada and Turkey continues apace. On May 29, 2003 Canada and Turkey signed a Framework Memorandum of Understanding establishing a structured basis on which to enhance bilateral relations across-the-board during a visit of the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Ankara.

Governmental contacts regularly occur at all levels. Prime Minister Martin met Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan during the June 2004 G8 Summit at Sea Island, Georgia. He also met with Turkish Energy Minister, Hilmi Guler, during a refuelling stop in Ankara on January 15, 2005 on his way to the tsunami affected states of southeast Asia, to discuss the strengthening of bilateral relations particularly in the commercial energy and mining sectors. The Commander of the Canadian Maritime Forces visited Turkey in April 2004 at the invitation of his Turkish counterpart. In September 2004 senior Turkish officials were in Ottawa and Montreal to complete negotiations on a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Social Security payments that took effect on January 1, 2005. Earlier in May 2003, the Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East) Gar Knutson led a trade mission to Turkey of 24 companies from across Canada to investigate trade and investment opportunities that was well received in Turkey. Foreign Affairs Minister Pettigrew met initially with his Turkish colleague, Abdullah Gul on December 9, 2004 on the margins of the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels. In addition both the Governor General and the Speaker of the House of Commons have been invited to visit Turkey when mutually convenient arrangements can be made. A full range of other high-level visit is currently being considered.

The Canadian Turkish Business Council was created in June 2002 to enhance commercial links between the private sectors in Canada and Turkey. In May 2005, it is organizing a major joint trade promotion and investment Conference in Istanbul with the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board followed by a trade mission visit to Ankara. In 2003, the Canadian Embassy organized a festival of Canadian films in Istanbul and Ankara and regularly promotes the showing of Canadian movies including those for children, at Turkish film festivals. It also supported the October 2004 publication and distribution of the first Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Authors in Turkish, subtitled "Beyond the 49th Parallel", to stimulate Turkish interest in modern Canadian literature. In addition, in 2004, the Canadian Embassy assisted Gazi University in Ankara to establish a Centre for Canadian Studies and is continuing to expand its interactive e-mail network of "Canadianists" working in Turkish Universities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Canada should strongly protest the February 2004 electoral process that disqualified serving parliamentarians and appeal to Iran to conduct open and fair democratic elections. Canada should also continue to work closely with other countries in multilateral forums, and with democratic forces inside Iran, including where still possible through parliamentary and political channels, to press for improvements in Iran's human rights performance.

The Government remains highly concerned about Iran's poor human rights performance, particularly issues related to the independence of the judiciary, arbitrary detention, freedom of expression, and the treatment of women, religious minorities, and inmates. The worrisome conduct of the elections in February 2004, marred by the disqualification of one-third of candidates, including serving parliamentarians and the closures of newspapers and websites associated with the campaign was also an area of serious concern. As a result, the Government continues to pursue a policy of controlled engagement with Iran and has clearly indicated that the development of closer bilateral ties with Iran hinges on progress in Iran's human rights performance and the promotion of democracy. The Government has been forthright and frank in making its views known to Iranians.

In both 2003 and 2004, The Government successfully worked with other like-minded partners to bring forward resolutions critical of Iran's lack of respect for human rights at the United Nations General Assembly. We have pursued these resolutions in the belief that joint international action will demonstrate to the Iranian Government that constructive change is needed. The text of the most recent resolution takes into account the positive changes observed in Iran over the past year, and emphasizes those issues which continue to cause concern. In all, 40 States co-sponsored the resolution with Canada, which was adopted by the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 17 November 2004 by a vote of 69 in favour, with 55 against and 51 abstentions. The resolution process sends a powerful political message: it focuses the attention of the international community on systematic and persistent human rights violations by Iranian authorities, stimulating debate on the situation and forcing Iran to account for its record.

The Government has also engaged in dialogue with the Special Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights on our concerns on Iran's human rights performance. Some of these UN bodies have already visited Iran, and issued recommendations for improvement. We regularly encourage Iran to act to implement these recommendations, as well as facilitate the visits of other Special Mechanisms including the Special Rapporteur on Torture.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Government of Canada should vigorously continue its efforts to achieve a full accounting from the Government of Iran for the illegal detention, torture and murder of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi, and should pursue all avenues of redress that will result in a just and satisfactory resolution.

Since Mrs Kazemi's tragic death in July 2003, the Government has demanded a full, transparent and credible investigation that will have real consequences for those responsible. When the Iranian protest failed to meet such standard legal requirements, the Government responded with significant diplomatic sanctions, such as the recall of our Ambassador for consultations on two occasions.

The Iranian justice system has yet to complete its consideration of this case. Following the acquittal of the accused in July 2004, the Kazemi family's Iranian lawyers have filed a request to appeal the verdict. The Iranian judiciary is expected to rule shortly on whether it will hear the appeal. The Government will continue to monitor this process closely, expressing any concerns as required, and working to ensure that impunity is denied to the perpetrators. Once the legal process in Iran has reached its conclusion, the Government will determine whether any further actions may be required.

The Government has also drawn heightened international attention to the particular circumstances of Ms Kazemi's death, including through direct engagement with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and like-minded countries, who have indicated their willingness to raise the issue with Iranian authorities. We have also raised the case in discussions with the UN Special Mechanisms for human rights in Geneva, which have a particularly valuable role to play in observing conditions and holding the Iranian Government to its human rights obligations.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Canada should at the same time explore ways to increase constructive contacts with Iranian civil society through educational, cultural and other exchanges, private sector and NGO links.

The Government's policy of controlled engagement with Iran deliberately places certain restrictions on contacts, including those on trade in controlled goods, on the opening of consulates, and on direct air links. These restrictions reflect the Government's serious concerns with Iran's behaviour on nuclear issues, human rights and terrorism. As there is no official development assistance programme in Iran, resources available to promote contacts with civil society are limited. However, within the limits of the policy framework and existing funding envelopes, the Government has pursued constructive contacts and dialogue. Canadian firms are active in Iran, particularly in the oil and gas, resources, and agriculture sectors. The Government will continue to explore opportunities for academic and cultural exchanges on matters of mutual interest. The Iranian-Canadian community's own linkages into Iran can also serve to assist in these endeavours.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Canada should continue to put pressure on Iran to abide fully by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and specifically, to implement the undertakings made to the International Atomic Energy Agency following Iran's admission of non-compliance in October 2003.

For the past two years, the Iranian nuclear issue has been at the forefront of discussions at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Seven reports issued by the Director General of the IAEA have provided disturbing evidence of a clear pattern of failure by Iran to meet its nuclear non-proliferation obligations. In response to Iran's behaviour, the Board of Governors of the IAEA adopted six strong resolutions registering its serious concern. On September 27, Canada assumed the chair of the IAEA Board of Governors for a one-year term. One of our objectives is to ensure that the Iranian nuclear issue is brought to an early and fully satisfactory conclusion at the IAEA.

The Government favours a multilateral approach to this issue and as such has been very active within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the G8 and other organizations. The Government has also repeatedly raised concerns regarding the scope and the nature of Iran's nuclear program directly with the Iranian government. The Government supported the adoption by the IAEA on November 29, 2004 of yet another strong IAEA resolution concerning Iran's nuclear program, which represented a further step toward a potential permanent solution addressing serious international concerns about Iran's nuclear activities.

On November 14, 2004 the European trio of the UK, France and Germany concluded another agreement with Iran, based largely on an earlier deal reached in October 2003 which Iran did not fully implement. Under this most recent agreement, Iran has once again agreed to suspend all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities subject to verification by the IAEA. In return, the European trio has agreed to enter into discussions with Iran on a long term agreement involving expanded cooperation in a number of areas, including the nuclear sector.

The Government offered its guarded support for the European trio-Iran agreement. However, as the continuation of the suspension depends on the negotiation of a longer-term arrangement, the Government intends to remain vigilant. If Iran does not honour fully its new agreement with the European trio, the Government believes the IAEA should take immediate action and bring the Iranian nuclear issue before the United Nations Security Council. In the interim, the Government will continue to urge Iran to comply fully with its Nuclear Non-Proliferation obligations.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should urge Saudi Arabia to address the sources of terrorism and religious extremism within its borders, and offer Canada's cooperation in common efforts to combat such terrorism and extremism. The Government should also actively pursue opportunities to promote dialogue and to build ties with Saudi Arabia. In particular, Canada should:

- **Strongly encourage changes in the direction of human rights, democratic, and educational reforms as being in Saudi Arabia's interest;**
- **Explore increased intellectual, educational and cultural as well as political exchanges.**

The Government has actively contributed to the international effort to combat terrorism and has ratified all twelve of the fundamental United Nations-sponsored counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. Currently, Saudi Arabia is only party to eight of these instruments. The Government uniformly and consistently encourages all countries to accede to, and effectively implement, all twelve of the conventions and protocols, and other related international laws.

Saudi Arabia has been confronting terrorists on its soil and has met with some successes in dismantling domestic terrorist organizations. Saudi Arabia has also taken steps domestically since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States to suppress the financing of terror organizations, including the creation of a central body to supervise charitable collections and the closing of suspect organizations such as Al Haramain Charitable Foundation. There has also been increased public discussion in Saudi Arabia on the issue of religious extremism. The Government has welcomed public statements by senior Saudi officials and members of the Royal Family in support of religious moderation.

Saudi Arabia is an active partner in the international campaign against terrorism and will be hosting an international Conference on Counter Terrorism from February 5-8, 2005. The Canadian Government will be represented at this conference with a delegation including representation from Foreign Affairs Canada, and the portfolio of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Canada will use this opportunity to remind Saudi Arabia of its international obligations and domestic responsibilities in this area.

The Government continues to advocate for good governance in Saudi Arabia and welcomed recent Saudi initiatives to increase public participation in governance through the expansion of the legislative role of the Shura Council, the establishment of the Forum for National Dialogue and its commitment to holding nationwide partial municipal elections beginning February 10, 2005. Although disappointed that women will not be allowed to participate as either candidates or voters in the 2005 elections, the Government will press Saudi Arabia to follow through on its announcement that women will be allowed to participate in the elections scheduled to take place in 2009. The Government will continue to encourage Saudi Arabia to expand these governance measures.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The human rights situation in Saudi Arabia continues to be cause for serious concern, particularly with regards to the use of capital punishment, torture, forced confessions, and the status of women. The Canadian Government has expressed its concern about the overall state of human rights in Saudi Arabia in our statements at both the United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and has raised specific human rights cases and concerns in our bilateral dealings with the Saudi government. The Government will continue to monitor the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and to express its concerns in this area in the future.

Education is an effective means of sharing Canadian ideas and values. Studying in foreign countries allows for exchanges on a person-to-person level. Several thousand Saudi students are presently in Canada, the majority in medical and engineering studies. In 2003, 428 visas were issued to Saudi students and by November 2004, 417 student visas were granted. The Government places much importance on educational exchanges and has a fully dedicated regional educational officer mandated to recruit students from the region to Canada placed at the Canadian Embassy to the United Arab Emirates. The total number of Saudi visitors to Canada has also increased, from 5246 persons in 2003 to 6423 for the period January-November 2004.

The Government hopes to host a parliamentary exchange with a delegation led by the President of the Shura Council from Saudi Arabia in 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Government of Canada should at the same time continue to impress upon the Government of Saudi Arabia the need for it to conduct a full investigation of the allegations of miscarriage of justice and torture made by Canadian citizen William Sampson, and the need for Saudi Arabia to comply fully with its international human rights obligations. Until justice is done, and seen to be done, bilateral relations will not be able to develop as constructively as we believe is in the mutual interest of both countries.

The release and pardon of Canadian-British dual-citizen William Sampson, along with six other detainees, from custody in Saudi Arabia was the result of cumulative Government efforts over the entire course of his detention. On numerous occasions, the Government has strongly called on Saudi Arabia to honour its obligations, as a Party to the United Nations Convention Against Torture, by fully investigating any credible allegations of torture and providing redress to the victims. The Government has also consistently expressed its human rights concerns with Saudi Arabia through Canada's country statements at the United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and intends to continue to voice such concerns in the future, as warranted.

RECOMMENDATION 12

In engaging the Government of Egypt in political dialogue, Canada should consistently encourage Egypt to institute democratic reforms and to respect basic standards of internationally recognized human rights, including in the necessary common efforts to curb political violence and religious extremism. Such efforts should also address underlying conditions of poverty and social exclusion.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

in Egypt as well as Governmental support for a Canadian presence in a cultural festival for impoverished youth.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government should ensure that Canadian development assistance to Egypt is concentrated in people-centred projects, working with independent NGOs wherever possible. Canada should also work with the private sector to advance responsible investment and trade that benefits both countries.

Canadian development assistance to Egypt is people-oriented and premised on "Canada to Egypt" support, meaning that the Government seeks and supports collaboration and partnerships with all types of civil society organizations, including NGOs and businesses, as well as governments at various levels in Egypt. The Government's overall programming goal is to support Egypt in its efforts to reduce poverty amongst the country's most marginalised people, in particular women and children and youth. This goal will be achieved through enhancing access by the poor to quality basic education and to employment through support to job creation by small and medium enterprises. To enhance the direct impact on the well-being of people, special attention is paid to human rights, gender equality, child protection, institutional capacity strengthening of NGOs and environmental sustainability.

In addition, the Government promotes investment in Egypt by Canadian firms, including through support for firms that create jobs in Egypt, transfer technology and introduce modern management techniques. Canada-sponsored projects also support corporate social responsibility and the needs of the environment, and address gender related barriers that women may face in the workplace. The Government also encourages investment through outreach and support to Canadian firms with an interest in the region.

The Government is encouraging the development of increased business ties with Egypt across many goods and services sectors that have demonstrated great potential for partnership. The Government publicizes such opportunities through the production of a bi-monthly Middle East e-newsletter that provides current information on business prospects and activities to over 1800 Canadian business contacts.

The Government is also working with the Canada-Arab Business Council to help generate greater private sector interest in the region. Another recent positive development includes the creation of a Canada-Egypt Business Council in Cairo with a membership of 200 people.

RECOMMENDATION 15

In order to encourage all possibilities for a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Government of Canada should consider how Canada can play a stronger role in supporting:

- **good governance, social development and educational efforts, working with pro-democracy partners in the region;**
- **conflict resolution, community dialogue and confidence-building measures that strengthen civil society;**
- **peace building initiatives, including facilitating, sponsoring and hosting peace activities in the region, in addition to playing a more active role in advancing the established Roadmap process for political negotiations.**

The Government firmly supports the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles signed on September 13, 1993. These should lead to a comprehensive agreement based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, including the right of all countries in the region to live within secure and recognized boundaries and the requirement for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967. The Government also firmly supports the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty of March 26, 1979 and the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty of October 26, 1994.

The Government supports the performance-based Quartet Roadmap to peace to which PM Sharon and PM Abbas pledged support at the Aqaba Summit in 2003.

The Government does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the territories occupied in 1967 (the Golan Heights, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip) and opposes all unilateral actions intended to predetermine the outcome of negotiations, including the establishment of settlements in the territories and unilateral moves to annex East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The Government considers such actions to be contrary to international law and unproductive for the peace process.

Concrete examples of Canadian policy in action:

- support for efforts by the Quartet (the US, the EU, the UN, and Russia) to encourage Israeli and Palestinian application of the Roadmap in accordance with the Aqaba Summit pledges of PM Sharon and PM Abbas;
- creation of a Special Coordinator, Middle East Peace Process;
- Canada has become the lead country in the process of achieving a viable and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian refugee issue, primarily as Gavel Holder of the Multilateral Refugee Working Group (RWG). In this capacity, we have established a community of Canadian and international experts on the refugee issue, maintained solidarity of purpose amongst the international community, and have worked to put in

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Given our an open and honest political dialogue with Egypt, the Government does not hesitate to make representations to the Government of Egypt about human rights, the role of civil society and the need for democratization. The Government regularly monitors the situation on the ground in Egypt and consistently encourages Egypt to institute democratic reforms and to respect its obligations under international human rights law – particularly with regard to Egypt's efforts to curb political violence and religious extremism.

Such actions are often coordinated with like-minded embassies in Cairo, including through the Donor Assistance Group, which Canada co-chairs, and its Participatory Development and Good Governance subgroup, which acts as a lever in bringing pressure to bear on the Egyptian Government while encouraging meaningful dialogue between government institutions and civil society to move the social, economic and human rights agenda forward.

The Government intends to continue annual political consultations with Egypt, which provide a further forum for discussion of such issues. The Government will also continue to speak with a broad spectrum of civil society in Egypt and is exploring avenues for cooperation to make the Egyptian political and legal process more open and accountable. Recently established links between the Canadian Supreme Court and the Egyptian Constitutional Court will be a particularly important area of cooperation in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada should use the 50th anniversary in 2004 of the establishment of bilateral relations with Egypt to significantly upgrade Canada's capacity to carry out educational and cultural cooperation activities and exchanges within Egypt and benefiting the wider Arab region. In particular, the Canadian government in cooperation with the provinces should strongly support the Al-Ahram Canadian University project and should consider the feasibility of establishing a Canadian Cultural Centre in Cairo.

The 50th anniversary of bilateral representation has been marked by events in both countries, including the January 2004 visit to Cairo of Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin, and the visit in September to Ottawa by Egyptian Foreign Minister Abul Gheit. The year of celebratory events culminated in a conference on Canada-Egypt relations hosted by the Canadian Embassy in Cairo and Cairo University intended to expose Egyptian policy makers to Canada's important presence and role in Egypt and in the region.

Cultural and learning exchanges are set to increase as a result of new partnerships developed during the 2004 commemorative year, including for example a new partnership between the Alexandria Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec and Université de Montréal. The Government has emphasized activities which offer permanent benefits, such as book donations to schools and libraries, rather than one-off events. The Government recognizes the importance of long-term educational partnerships for both its learning and its commercial benefits. The Government also encourages such partnerships as a way of increasing Canada's visibility in Egypt, with one such example being the forthcoming opening of the Al Ahram Canadian University in 2005. Other such recent activities included a Canadian film festival and art exhibit

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- place the information, data, and methodologies that will be needed once negotiations resume;
- declared conviction that the status of Jerusalem can be resolved only as part of a general settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute;
 - Canada is supporting an initiative by the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto to identify new and practical recommendations on the administration and sovereignty of the Old City and Holy Sites in Jerusalem using economic, religious and cultural concerns of Israelis and Palestinians as a starting point to formulate durable and workable solutions.

The Government's position on incitement in the Middle East region is an extension of our domestic legislation and Canadian values, and we take all relevant opportunities to remind parties to the conflict of the importance of combating incitement.

Concrete examples of Canadian policy in action:

- The Government has supported an initiative by Sesame Workshop and its local partners to develop educational materials and a community outreach program to complement a television program for young children in Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Exposure to the series has helped Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli children learn more about their own and each other's language and culture which, in turn, is helping break cultural stereotypes;
- The Government is also supporting an innovative effort by UNRWA to teach Palestinian children in refugee camps in Syria the importance of tolerance, self-esteem and peaceful conflict resolution using "popular theatre methodology". This project is spearheaded by a Canadian educator based in Damascus.

In recent months there have been three important developments which will affect the future course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: i) Prime Minister Sharon's plan for Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank is moving ahead; ii) President Bush's reaffirmation, since his re-election, of his commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state; and iii) the election on January 9 of a new Palestinian Authority President. These developments have opened a window of opportunity for progress toward peace in the Middle East, as evidenced by the agreement between Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas at Sharm-el-Sheikh on February 8 to cease mutual violence.

The Government believes that it is important to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Palestinian Authority. In this respect, Canada will consider how best to support Palestinian governance, security during and after Israeli withdrawal, and developing the Palestinian economy.

RECOMMENDATION 16

Canada should ensure that its humanitarian and development assistance activities in the Palestinian territories make the maximum contribution to meeting human needs priorities while promoting peaceful and pluralistic solutions to the conflict.

Canada has a long-standing commitment to regional stability and development in the Middle East. Canada recognizes the strong connection between stability and peace, poverty and the situation of the Palestinian refugees. Without stability and security, poverty cannot be reduced in a sustainable way, and a just solution to the problem of the refugees is fundamental to achieving a comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East. The continuing plight of the Palestinian refugees displaced by the Arab-Israeli conflict is among the most important and most complex issues to be addressed by the Middle East Peace Process.

The Government is responding to the immediate needs of Palestinian refugees in the region, but it also takes a longer-term view with projects oriented toward development. This includes building the capacity of local organizations and communities and investing in education.

A Family Reunification Project provided significant benefit to 149 Palestinian refugee families. Those families had been stranded on the Egyptian side of the newly drawn border following the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty (1979) and were separated from family members and the larger communities living in Rafah City in Gaza. The Government provided funding that enabled these families to build new houses in Rafah. The Government also facilitated the political and logistical negotiations that took place between the governments of Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority.

Working through UNRWA, the Government is also contributing to the upgrading of housing and infrastructure in the Neirab and Ein el-Tal refugee camps in Syria. The project will provide new or improved housing for 6,000 people and improved communal and commercial services for another 3,000 refugees.

Through Oxfam-Québec, the Government has helped communities in five refugee camps organize and build or revitalize community resources such as three libraries, a playground, and a women's centre, offering a variety of activities to children, youth, and women to promote creative expression, democratic practices, and understanding of self and the environment.

With the Government's support, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has assisted the municipality of Rafah in putting together a strategic plan for its long-term development with input from a wide variety of local groups. About half the population served by the municipality are refugees.

The Technical and Vocational Training Project for Palestinian women is developing two multipurpose centres in Gaza refugee camps (Jabalya and Nuseirat) to provide vocational training opportunities and social services for low-income and refugee women.

Through its scholarship fund for Palestinian women, the Government is helping refugee women

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

in Lebanon complete undergraduate university training. This will allow them to develop professional and management skills, particularly in the areas of business, science, biology, and engineering. In addition to enhancing their ability as income earners, the project will increase their contribution to the cultural, psychological, and economic development of their communities.

The Government makes significant annual contributions to the ongoing operations of UNRWA in the region. This is in addition to the contributions since October 2000 to UNRWA emergency programs for the West Bank and Gaza. UNRWA provides primary school education and vocational training for the registered refugee population in the region. It offers primary health care to refugees, and contracts or operates secondary health care facilities. It provides services such as drinking water, sewage, and garbage disposal in the refugee camps, and is involved in employment creation through microfinance and microenterprise programs. UNRWA's role is critical in maintaining access to basic health and social services for the most disadvantaged among the refugee population.

The Government's Expert and Advisory Services Fund supports Canadian involvement in the multilateral negotiations of the Middle East Peace Process. The final status of Palestinian refugees is perhaps one of the most complex issues faced by the Middle East Peace Process. Canada, as chair of the Refugee Working Group, plays an important leadership role through policy-oriented research and the provision of expert advisory services. It also facilitates international dialogue around this issue. The project is now focussing on the issues of planning for demographic change and the movement of people, compensation to Palestinian refugees, as well as gauging and engaging the public in debate on the refugee issue.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Canada should continue to impress upon Israeli and Palestinian authorities their responsibilities to respect international human rights obligations and their mutual interest in ending all violence, particularly terrorist violence targeting innocent civilians, and pursuing peace negotiations in good faith.

The Government has strongly advocated moderation and diplomatic support for those who take risks for peace. The Government has emphasized the importance of practical contributions such as participation in peacekeeping forces, support for human rights and the establishment of development assistance programs in the region.

Concrete examples of Canadian policy in action:

- The Government continues to emphasize, at the highest levels within the Palestinian Authority (PA), the importance that we and other members of the international community attach to adherence to international human rights norms;
- Canada closely follows the human rights situation in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and is in regular contact with Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs. We raise human rights issues with the Government of Israel in both bilateral and multilateral fora;

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- Canada has urged Israel repeatedly, both publicly and privately, to freeze all settlement activity - on the grounds that settlements are contrary to international law and an obstacle to peace;
- Canada has consistently maintained that Israel's construction of the barrier inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem is contrary to international law;
- Through high level bilateral interventions and in international fora such as the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Commission on Human Rights, Canada has urged both parties to end the violence and to stop practices which infringe on human rights;
- Canada has supported HaMoked, an Israeli legal rights organization, to establish a legal and human rights internet data base for use by those engaged in the defence of human rights in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem;
- Canada is funding a project by the Early Childhood Resource Centre, based in the West Bank, to raise awareness in Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza of the importance of early childhood development in general and children's rights in particular.
- Canada has also supported the faculties of law at the University of Windsor and the University of Toronto to undertake a judicial sector assessment mission and deliver a two week course on constitutional, administrative and procedural law. These separate but mutually reinforcing initiatives are expected to build the foundation for future Canadian engagement in strengthening the Palestinian legal sector. CIDA has allocated funds to assist with the Palestinian elections;
- The Government and UNICEF are jointly supporting a remedial education project, providing compensatory education to children who have missed classes due to closures and curfews.

The Government condemns all acts of terrorism, wherever they may occur. Canada has called for the dismantlement of terrorist networks, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Concrete examples of Canadian policy in action:

- listing of Hamas, Hezbollah and other groups as terrorist organizations in accordance with UN regulations and Canadian legislation;
- terrorist acts against Israeli civilians draw Canadian Government condemnation in the form of public statements; as a matter of public policy, Canada accepts no suggestion of moral equivalency;
- delivery of strong exhortations to the Palestinian Authority to dismantle infrastructure of terrorism.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The longer term role and capabilities of Canadian diplomatic, defence, and development assistance resources in advancing the Middle East peace process should be re-assessed in the context of the forthcoming review of Canada's international policies announced by the Government in February 2004.

The overall question of Canada's long-term role and capabilities in the international arena is a focus of the International Policy Review process, and the specific question of the Middle East Peace Process was addressed during the consultation and development process. While the forthcoming International Policy Statement does not make specific reference to this issue, the current draft reaffirms the Canadian approach to advancing the Middle East Peace Process by singling out traditional Canadian emphasis on diversity, tolerance, regional peace and security/stability, human rights, and good governance in our foreign policy.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Government of Canada should strongly encourage the Government of Jordan to continue along a path of liberalizing socio-economic, democratic, good governance and human rights reforms. Canada should also pursue cooperation with Jordan on regional peace and democracy-building objectives, including cultivating channels for inter-faith dialogue and for political dialogue at both official and civil society levels.

The Government's programming in Jordan and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa is based on the reduction of poverty and income inequality, support of good governance and stronger democratic institutions and the enhancement of human security. CIDA programming dovetails well with Jordanian priorities.

The Government's support of Jordan's strategy for "Education reform for the knowledge economy" has leveraged support from the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the US, the UK, Germany and Japan. The Government has invested over \$20 million in e-learning in schools, in e-learning equipment and training for the Ministry of Education and in a broadband network linking universities, colleges, schools, post offices and telecentres throughout Jordan. Canada-funded projects in Jordan also support technical and vocational training, waste water management, waste recycling, power generation, rangeland management and women entrepreneurs.

The Government has also provided funding to the Regional Human Security Centre in Amman, which fosters a human security dialogue, especially on human rights, governance and small arms proliferation, throughout the Middle East and North Africa; its location in Jordan is testimony to that commitment to the international Human Security Network. Canada has also supported the Jordan Royal Human Rights Commission in providing human rights training for Jordanian judicial and police personnel, to bring Jordan into compliance with its obligations under UN human rights conventions.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Canada and Jordan collaborate to good effect in the search for solutions to conflicts in the Middle East (the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq), where Jordan's moderate and constructive policies make it an interlocutor of choice for Canada. Jordan is a signatory of the Ottawa Convention banning Land Mines and has advocated for the Convention in the region as well as ridding itself of its own stock of mines, an objective it achieved in April 2003. Jordan is also a signatory of the Rome Treaty which created the International Criminal Court.

Prince Hassan bin Talal, uncle of King Abdullah, is a world leader in promoting inter-faith dialogue. He has advocated in support of this concept in many countries including Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 20

Canada should continue to encourage and provide support to the Government of Morocco as it pursues its broad program of reform. In particular, Canada should increase assistance in the area of education and continue assistance for democratisation, governance reform and strengthening civil society.

Canada maintains excellent relations with the Kingdom of Morocco and supports the social, political and economic reforms undertaken by the Kingdom. CIDA programming in Morocco for 2003-2010 will allow the creation of programs to support primary education, professional education, democratic development and equality between genders. Initiatives such as the \$13 M Reinforcement of institutional capacities during the decentralisation of the Moroccan education system Project (PROCADEM) or the \$10 M Reinforcement of local capacities and citizen participation in local governance Project are good examples. Foreign Affairs Canada and the Canadian embassy in Morocco encourage the efforts of the Government of Morocco. For example, the embassy has developed the "I Read With Canada" initiative, which established three libraries for children aged 5 - 12 years. Two others will be established in 2005. Foreign Affairs Canada also facilitates sending young Canadian interns to work for various Moroccan NGOs. These young Canadians contribute to the development of these NGOs, through developing information technology such as websites or databases, or by offering specific expertise.

Prime Minister Martin discussed issues of reform with His Majesty King Mohamed VI and with Moroccan Prime Minister Driss Jettou during his visit in December 2004. He took this opportunity to reiterate Canada's support for the ambitious reform program being undertaken in the Kingdom of Morocco.

RECOMMENDATION 21

Given the importance of the states of Central Asia and the developments that have taken place there since September 2001, the Government of Canada should revisit the recommendations contained in the Committee's 2001 report Advancing Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia in the context of reviewing its relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Canada's engagement with Central Asia has increased following the recommendations of the 2001 report by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on advancing Canadian objectives in Central Asia. The Government has formulated a strategy on this region that stresses security, economic development, democratic values and respect for rule of law.

The Government is in the process of reviewing representation abroad to determine where limited resources can best serve Canada's interests in way that both respects Canadian values and maximises limited resources. In addition, the numbers of staff at the Canadian embassy in Kazakhstan and officials dedicated to working on the region in Ottawa have been bolstered since 2001. The Government's Global Partnership Program, which aims to reduce the risks posed by weapons and materials of mass destruction, has also begun to develop activities in Central Asia through the International Science and Technology Centre.

Canada's economic relations with the region have developed significantly with closer cooperation, regular consultation and increased investment. The Government has facilitated the participation of companies coming from both Canada and Central Asia in agricultural, construction, mining and oil and gas trade exhibitions. Further, a regional trade mission to Central Asia is being planned for Spring 2005.

The 2001 SCFAIT report promoted the importance of "Parliamentary Diplomacy." This tool has been used to engage the countries of Central Asia. Since 2001, Canada, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic have exchanged parliamentary delegations.

Since 2001, the Government has more than doubled its development assistance to Central Asia. Tajikistan has been the main recipient of official development assistance with a focus on agriculture and water resource management. Canada has provided several organisations across the region support for technical assistance and capacity building projects promoting democratisation, good governance, gender equality, eco-responsibility, and micro-credit enterprises. Such initiatives have been aimed at promoting sustainable development, environmental responsibility, deeper democratic reforms and economic well being. The International Policy Review will influence the Government's program direction in the region.

The Government works regularly with diplomatic representatives from Central Asia at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Mine Action program in Tajikistan is a notable area of cooperation. The OSCE is also developing ammunition destruction programs and police assistance projects. Canada is on the Board of Advisors for a regional educational institution, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and works to combat money laundering and corruption. Canada consistently raises human rights, good governance and democratic development through the organisation.

The Government, through the Department of National Defence, has established Military Training Assistance Programs with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These programs focus on language and peacekeeping training for and are aimed at facilitating Central Asian engagement in NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Government of Canada should encourage India and Pakistan to continue their composite talks, and should stand ready with the rest of the international community to contribute to the resolution of long-standing disputes, particularly that over Kashmir, as appropriate.

The Government supports the pursuit of a peacefully negotiated solution to the situation in Kashmir, particularly one that would take into account the interests of the Kashmiri people, improve human rights in the region, and end all acts of terrorism. Since 1996, Canada and India have met semi-annually under the auspices of the Canada-India Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, and Canada uses this opportunity to strongly encourage the Government of India to take substantive measures against acts of terror in Kashmir and elsewhere. The next Canada-India Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism will take place in Delhi in the spring of 2005.

To this end, Canada supports the Composite Dialogue process and hopes that this mechanism will allow India and Pakistan to continue to resolve areas of disagreement, including Kashmir.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Government of Canada should continue to urge the governments of Pakistan and India to work together to reduce the risk of nuclear escalation in South Asia and, given recent revelations, redouble their efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the central instrument in which Canada's nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy is rooted. The Government will continue to promote universal adherence to the NPT, along with new and strengthened instruments that enhance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to respond to clandestine nuclear activities that could lead to the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and to invigorate efforts to roll back nuclear proliferation where it has occurred.

The Government remains particularly concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology in South Asia, and its implication not only for this region but also neighbouring regions. Canada regularly calls upon India and Pakistan to:

- take concrete steps to meet standards defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1172 and endorsed by the international community;
- ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT);
- participate in the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT);
- implement all aspects of UNSCR 1540, including institution and enforcement of sound export controls, with respect to nuclear technology, equipment and materials; and

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- clearly separate civilian and military nuclear fuel cycles and place the civilian material and facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, as well as signature, ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocol.

The Government maintains that underlying regional security issues in South Asia cannot be resolved without sustained bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan. As such, Canada welcomes the ongoing Composite Dialogue and is encouraged by the commitment of both countries to resolve their differences in a spirit of compromise.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Government of Canada should continue to insist on the restoration and strengthening of democracy in Pakistan, as well as greater respect for human rights and faster action on reducing poverty and meeting other development challenges, and should continue to pursue these goals through a policy of constructive engagement.

Assisting Pakistan in its efforts to strengthen national democratic institutions is a long-standing Canadian objective as a critical element of a complex set of solutions required to address the multi-dimensional governance challenges confronting Pakistan. Canada will continue to work within the Commonwealth to press Pakistan on meaningful democratic development, including through the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. While the Government supports the ultimate goal of a fully-functioning and stable democracy in Pakistan, constructive bilateral engagement must include a broad range of areas - from political party activities and federal institutions, to health and education, law enforcement, customs and justice. By engaging Pakistan on broad governance issues, the Government can help foster a culture of democracy and civic engagement that could help to stem the cycle of coups and facilitate a lasting and stable democracy.

Poverty reduction is a central focus of the Government's development strategy for Pakistan. More specifically, Canadian efforts seek to improve the quality and delivery of social services, and increase access to such services by the poor. Poverty and other development challenges can be partially addressed by focussing on governance issues.

RECOMMENDATION 25

Given the critical importance of increasing access to adequate and inclusive education in Pakistan, the Government of Canada should apply stringent conditions to ensure that its debt for education swap results in tangible progress toward this goal; increase scholarships and other forms of academic exchanges with that country; and encourage the Government of Pakistan to proceed with its commitment to register all madrassas and regulate their curricula.

Canadian and Pakistani officials held extensive discussions in 2004 on how to maximize the use of proceeds generated by a Canadian debt conversion scheme to improve education in Pakistan. In accordance with Canada's Basic Education Action Plan and Country Strategy for Pakistan, officials agreed that the proceeds would support basic public education (primary and

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

elementary), with particular consideration given to the quality of education and to programs supporting gender equity. Canada's development assessment indicates that while there has been considerable progress in increasing school attendance in Pakistan in recent years (especially at the primary level), there has been insufficient efforts to improve the quality of classroom education. Pakistan lags behind developed countries in implementing child-centred and activity-based learning techniques, which continues to limit the educational achievement and performance of children attending public schools.

Strengthening the quality of classroom teaching in Pakistan is largely a function of improving teacher education. Pakistan's approximately 115 teacher education colleges, which are operated by provincial governments, are significantly under-funded. In the absence of considerable external assistance, these colleges are unable to manage transition from rote-based teaching techniques to more advanced forms of instruction. The Canadian debt proceeds will be directed to these institutions to improve teacher college facilities, teaching resources and programmes delivered for pre-service and in-service teacher education. The Canadian debt proceeds represent a small contribution towards the significant and challenging improvements needed. However, international experience consistently indicates that improving teacher education is an effective approach to improving student performance and educational outcomes in developing countries.

Education is one of Canada's four priority sectors for development programming in Pakistan. The debt conversion exercise will make education the Government's largest sectoral commitment to Pakistan's development in coming years. The Government will also work with other donor countries to engage the Government of Pakistan on madrasa reform and curriculum improvements. These difficult and domestically sensitive reforms require encouragement from the international community, and the Government will actively support this effort.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Government of Canada should continue to pursue its current policy of re-engagement with India, and, where possible, support Indian government efforts to provide adequate education for the most disadvantaged groups in society. Canada should also support efforts to decrease inter-communal tensions.

Founded initially on the Commonwealth connection, Canada-India bilateral relations are traditionally broad based and characterized by straightforward and constructive cooperation and dialogue.

The announcement of the Partners for the 21st Century: Joint Statement by India and Canada, in October 2003, signalled an important evolution in the bilateral relationship. The Joint Statement clearly articulates Canada and India's shared interests and lays out a framework to increase trade and investment, address security concerns, and strengthen civil society links. The 2005 India-Canada Joint Statement, announced during Prime Minister Martin's January 18, 2005 visit to India, underlined India's support for Prime Minister Martin's L20 initiative and reaffirmed both Canada and India's commitment to enhance their dialogues on international, regional and global strategic issues.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Canada's development assistance programming has provided humanitarian support and promoted socio-economic development in India for more than five decades. Since India's capacity to diagnose development problems, prescribe solutions, and shape sophisticated policy is strong, development assistance has been very effective in helping India meet its vast and wide-ranging challenges. Reflecting this, and in response to a Government of India request, Canada decided in late 2003 to phase out its bilateral development assistance program, which will end in March 2006.

Canada's development engagement with India has evolved from a donor-recipient relationship to an equal partnership. The Government will continue to work with the Government of India and civil society partners in both Canada and India to meaningfully contribute to helping India meet its development goals. In particular, the Government will continue to use its multilateral and partnership programs to advance these goals.

The Government also sees this commitment to partnership as an important component of a broader effort to mitigate the impact on inter-communal tension on the lives of the most vulnerable. Canada recognizes that more work needs to be done and is aware of the unique challenges facing modern India. The Government remains committed to working with India in a useful and constructive way.

Growing Canada-India cooperation and dialogue is complementary to a rapidly growing Indo-Canadian community, now estimated to be near one million. India is the second largest source country of immigrants (over 24,000 in 2003) to Canada and this community is a positive, catalytic force in our relationship.

RECOMMENDATION 27

Recognizing the recent democratic progress made by Indonesia, notably in embracing pluralism, as well as its potential as a model for the rest of the Muslim world, the Government of Canada should continue to both encourage and assist the Government of Indonesia in emphasizing pluralism as a key element of its democracy.

As the world's most populous Muslim country and one of its largest democracies, Indonesia is a model for many countries. Indonesia has made significant advances in consolidating its democracy in recent years, as demonstrated by the success and transparency of its legislative and first-ever direct presidential elections in 2004. At the November 2004 APEC meeting held in Chile, PM Martin met with recently elected President Yudhoyono and discussed the successful presidential elections held in 2004.

The Government supports these ongoing reforms and the further promotion of Indonesia's democratic development and inclusive pluralism through development assistance and high level exchanges.

As a multicultural, geographically vast country, Canada has much experience in managing diversity to offer Indonesia. Recognizing this potential role, the Government has supported engagement by a number of Canadian experts on pluralism and respect for rights and freedoms,

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

including at universities and conferences. The Government also regularly sponsors events that promote human rights and tolerance to increase public awareness of these issues in Indonesia.

The Government continues to work closely with the government of Indonesia to advance its human rights agenda as outlined in the National Action Plan for Human Rights (Ran-HAM). Canada and Indonesia hold annual bilateral consultations on human rights to share information, express concerns and discuss possible areas of cooperation. The Government also supports several Canadian non-governmental organizations working on human rights advocacy and capacity-building in Southeast Asia.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Government of Canada should continue to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with Indonesia in the areas of democracy and governance; support civil society groups that work to reduce ethnic and other tensions; and support education reform, building on the exemplary experiences of McGill University's programs.

Canada and Indonesia issued a Joint Ministerial Statement in July 2004 highlighting key areas of future bilateral cooperation, including democracy and governance. Indonesia continues to undertake significant reforms to strengthen governance, including implementation of constitutional reforms to facilitate direct presidential elections in 2004. Canadian development assistance programming supported a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) voter education program in advance of these elections to encourage broad and informed voter participation.

Building on relations with key Indonesian government officials, academics, private sector representatives and policy-makers, Canada hosted a symposium in October 2004 to discuss bilateral relations and partnership with Indonesia's new administration. Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri and Member of the Steering Committee for the McGill University-State Institutes of Islamic Studies (IAIN) network, attended the symposium as a keynote speaker. The Government is also working towards engaging in a foreign policy dialogue with Indonesia in the coming year. These initiatives contribute to a multi-dimensional framework of Canada-Indonesia partnership that includes civil society participation and input. The Government consistently urges Indonesia to pursue peaceful resolution to internal conflicts in bilateral and multilateral fora. The Government has emphasized the need to protect human rights in conflict-affected areas and has supported programs to raise local awareness of such issues. Canada welcomes the stated intent of Indonesia's new government to seek non-military solutions to areas of conflict within Indonesia's borders and encourages further efforts in this regard.

Indonesia's Aceh and North Sumatra provinces were hardest hit by the December 26 tsunami causing the worst devastation of any affected country. The province of Aceh has been going through 29 years of armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military (TNI). Canada will seek to ensure that our relief and reconstruction assistance supports conflict resolution. At the Jakarta meeting on the tsunami and earthquake response held on January 6, 2005, Minister Pettigrew delivered PM Martin's message, stating that "Canada will be

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

there - as a full partner- for as long as it takes.” Canada will ensure that it is a valued, responsive and first tier partner to this strategically important Islamic democracy.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Canada should also pursue increased counter-terrorist and security cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, including for the peaceful resolution of ethnic and other conflicts.

Southeast Asia is often referred to as the second front in the global campaign against international terrorism, and Indonesia remains one of the most affected countries in the region. The Government continues to support Indonesia in its efforts to counter terrorist activities within its borders. This commitment has been expressed by Canada’s Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to their Indonesian counterparts and is supported by Canada’s engagement in bilateral, regional and multilateral counter-terrorism capacity building initiatives with Indonesia. The Government has undertaken a number of initiatives to support Indonesia’s counter-terrorism capacity building efforts, and will pursue increased engagement under the Foreign Affairs Canada managed “Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program” that was created as a mechanism of the April 2004 National Security Policy. In these endeavours, Canada consistently emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all efforts to combat terrorism are taken in accordance with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

The Government continues to work closely with the Indonesian government and partners in the region to identify opportunities to assist Indonesia in pursuing peaceful resolution to regional conflicts. The Government supports the work of Canadian NGOs for conflict resolution in Indonesia, and particularly in West Timor, Central Sulawesi, Aceh and West Papua.

RECOMMENDATION 30

Given that most Canadian development assistance to Malaysia will end in 2004, the Government of Canada should ensure adequate resources remain available to continue working with other countries and moderate civil-society groups — particularly women’s groups — to strengthen institutions of governance and support democratic development, pluralism, minority and other human rights in Malaysia.

Malaysia has achieved remarkable economic progress and has emerged as an economic leader in Southeast Asia. In March 2004, Canada formally ceased providing bilateral official development assistance to Malaysia, marking the transition to a new bilateral relationship - from a donor-recipient basis to one based on full and equal partnership. Export Development Canada (EDC) opened an office in Malaysia in May 2004 to promote and facilitate this new partnership. The Government remains strongly committed to the promotion of good governance, strengthened national institutions, democratic development and human rights in Malaysia and continues to explore new ways to pursue these goals. Ongoing assistance objectives include fostering a long-term relationship with Malaysia and the region and helping to address key sustainable development issues.

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Government welcomes recent progress in these areas, particularly under the leadership of the new Malaysian administration which has pursued an ambitious agenda aimed at improved governance and national institutions. The Government is encouraged by the recent release of the former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister who had been incarcerated for some seven years. His release signals renewed confidence in judicial independence and respect for human rights in Malaysia.

In September 2003, Malaysian delegates participated in the "Canada and Islam in Asia" conference at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. This initiative provided an opportunity for Canada to demonstrate commitment to promoting issues of pluralism and governance and to create networks of academics, policy analysts and youth in the region. In December 2004, Malaysia participated in a plurilateral symposium on human rights, co-hosted by Canada, China and Norway and held in Vietnam. As one of the co-hosts of this forum, Canada takes an active role and promotes key human rights issues and best practices regarding areas such as women's rights, freedom of expression, pluralism, and civil society participation, amongst others.

The Government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade is a comprehensive document that outlines the government's commitment to human rights and international law. It details the government's actions to address the concerns raised in the report, including the release of prisoners of conscience and the promotion of democratic reforms in various countries. The document also discusses the government's efforts to strengthen its international trade relations and its commitment to a free and open world economy. The government's response is a testament to its leadership in the international community and its dedication to the values of freedom, justice, and human rights.

DOCS
CA1 EA 2005E92 ENG
Government response to the Report
of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs and International
Trade : exploring Canada's
16815975(E)
.B3740948(E)

LIBRARY E A / BIBLIOTHÈQUE A E



3 5036 01010498 5

