



**The National Council on Canada Arab Relations
NCCAR
Le Conseil National des Relations Canado Arab**

Annual Report

2002

National Council on Canada-Arab Relations - NCCAR
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1.0 Executive Summary

2002 was an exciting year for the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations. As an organization, NCCAR has achieved great success in fulfilling its mandate and has overcome many obstacles and challenges. This report provides a detailed account of NCCAR's organizational development, fundraising initiatives, programming activities, community relations, media relations and government relations. The accomplishments made in all of these areas are substantial, given NCCAR's limited organizational capacity.

With regards to organizational development, in 2002 NCCAR reduced the size of its Board of Directors from fourteen to seven. This change has resulted in a Board of Directors that is more effective in governance and leadership. Until next general meeting in 2003, NCCAR will continue to operate with a small board.

On a programming level, 2002 marked NCCAR's fourth year as an implementing organisation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade – Youth International Internship Program. NCCAR placed eight young Canadian interns with English media outlets and international organizations based in the Arab World – in particular, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. The performance of the interns and the quality of the internships gained acclaim from DFAIT. A former NCCAR intern was highlighted in the DFAIT magazine entitled Canada and the World.

One of the most important achievements of this year is our community outreach effort. NCCAR representatives visited with communities across Canada. We received an encouraging message from these communities; they want a more deliberate and proactive organization to carry their voice on international issues to Ottawa. It also became obvious that the community would like to see more cooperation and coordination with the Canadian Arab Federation, a grass roots Arab community umbrella organization. NCCAR is encouraging more Arab-Canadian community involvement at the local level to inform mainstream Canada on Arab World issues.

NCCAR continues to strengthen its relations with the members of the Canadian and international media. We are seeing a qualitative and quantitative improvement in our public image. Measuring this success can be achieved by observing the number of times NCCAR is quoted, published and, unfortunately sometimes criticism in and by the media is an indicator of success. Fortunately, the first two factors have been achieved, so was the third factor. This year we saw, despite our balanced perspective, a series of attacks on NCCAR.

This year, we organized a proactive campaign to provide a balanced Canadian perspective on the issues relating to the Arab World. During his visit to Canada, the President of Israel addressed the Canada Israel Committee. This event saw the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Graham attacked by both organizers and the audience. NCCAR came to the defence of Canada's position on the Palestine-Israel conflict and publicly supported the Minister's position.

During 2002, NCCAR improved on its already positive relationship with different departments within the federal Canadian government, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Ministry of Revenue, and Heritage Canada. We engaged Ministers, Senators, Members of Parliament and senior bureaucrats in an attempt to effectively deliver the views and concerns of our membership.

This year NCCAR made several visits to the Arab World in an effort to obtain a thorough understanding of the current events, policies and economic and political trends within the region. We met with a variety of non-government organisations, politicians, members of the private sector, government officials, and representatives from international institutions such as the United Nations. These field visits are informative and strategic. In addition to learning of political and economic development opportunities for Canada and the perception of Canada by the countries of the Arab World, NCCAR, as a result, is building new and solidifying old partnerships.

Although NCCAR has achieved much success, the organization remains limited in its capacity to deliver on a number of issues including better communication with our members and supporters and effective communication with the Arab-Canadian community at large. NCCAR principal challenge is its limited financial resources. We remain constrained by our limited budget, inability to organize an effective fundraising system and lack of sustained donations. This year, for the first time, NCCAR planned a series of fundraising activities among which include an initiative from Canadian corporate supporters working in the Arab World; a fundraising cocktail dinner in Montreal; and a sustaining membership drive that substantially increased our base in Western Canada.

In 2003 we will continue to speak for Canadians concerned about Canada Arab World Relations. We will focus directly on the main institutions and individuals who develop Canada's policy on the Arab World. Our priorities will also concentrate on building and redesigning the organizational infrastructure, which will allow us to deliver our programs effectively and develop new ones. NCCAR's web site is also undertaking serious development and will be in operations in mid February with new capacities and up to date information. The newsletter ArabiCa is of extreme significance to NCCAR's educational programs and to inform our membership and friends of activities and development at the Council, will be published in timely fashion. We will also strengthen our fundraising capacity. There is a lot to be done to achieve our objectives and the challenges are tremendous. We need your assistance.

2003 is going to be an exiting year at NCCAR we hope that you will continue to support us.

Mazen Chouaib
Executive Director

2.0 The Organization

NCCAR was established in 1985 by Canadians who believed that our national interest is best served through expanded knowledge, social, scientific and educational exchange with the Arab world. NCCAR is a non-profit organization incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporation Act.

Canada has a reputation in the international community for fairness, respect for political diversity and support for the rule of law. These ideals embrace the foundation of the NCCAR.

2.1 Mission Statement

NCCAR is a non-profit organisation dedicated to building bridges of understanding and cooperation between Canada and the Arab World

المجلس الوطني للعلاقات الكندية العربية هو منظمة ليست من أجل الربح
تكرس جهودها لبنيان جسور التفاهم والتعاون
بين كندا والعالم العرب

Le NCCAR est un organisme à but non lucratif consacré à établir des ponts de sensibilisation et de coopération entre le Canada et le Monde Arabe.

2.2 Objectives

NCCAR objectives, activities and primary goals are based on the following three beliefs:

1. Canada and the Arab world share aspirations for world peace
2. Canada and the Arab world both have a common interest in increased trade, and
3. Canada and the Arab world desire expanded cultural and educational ties.

Objectives

1. To promote and assist programs that increase Canadian awareness and knowledge of the Arab World
2. and, to encourage the expansion of commercial, scientific, educational and cultural links between Canadian and Arab institutions.

2.3 Activities

- Promoting greater recognition of the social, economic, political and cultural contributions of Canadians of Arab origins.
- Making information related to the Arab world available to individuals, organisations, schools and universities, libraries, the media and the Canadian provincial and federal governments.

- Publishing a monthly newsletter and a quarterly journal (ArabiCa), which highlights our organizational achievements, current political and economic issues relating to Canada and the Arab world and to the Arab-Canadian community, educational programs and upcoming events.
- Facilitating a speaker and lecture bureau to provide information and analysis to various educational, governmental, non-governmental, media organisations and the general public.
- Sponsoring study tours and speaker tours between Canada and the Arab world.
- Coordinating the NCCAR Parliamentary Internship Program for Arab-Canadian university students.
- Coordinating the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade-Youth International Internship Program for eight inters in 2002 and with a 12-intern objective for 2003.
- Supporting cultural and historical exhibitions of Canada and the Arab World.
- Advocating balanced media coverage on issues relating to Canada and the Arab World and to the Arab-Canadian community.

2.4 Board of Directors

Hussein Amery – President

Hussein Amery was elected President of NCCAR in June of 2002. Mr. Amery obtained an undergraduate degree in Political Science and a Masters degree in International Relations from the University of Western Ontario. He currently holds the position of Manager for Asia - Europe programs at the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. Mr. Amery has undertaken various critical assignments within projects funded by the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and Canadian International Development Agency, in the Arabian Peninsula, Europe and South East Asia. He has also represented Canada through the International Development Research Centre at the Multilateral Refugee Working Group meeting in Rome. In the past, Mr. Amery contributed significantly to the Middle Eastern Times Journal, has held managerial position with Medical Aid for Palestine and acted as an Advisor for a Member of Parliament. In addition, Mr. Amery has published numerous articles and papers on Arab politics, economics and social issues.

Harold Dueck -Vice President

Harold Dueck is currently the National Sales Manager, Canada for sales at Cargill Limited. Mr. Dueck spent five years as the Middle East director of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), working with Palestinians in the West Bank. He has been involved with numerous National Council projects over the last 12 years, particularly on trade issues between Canada and the Palestinians. During this period he has held senior sales positions with two other companies and has led several private industry trade visits to the Arab World. Harold has spoken frequently about the Middle East on Parliament Hill, in Universities and other Middle East related conferences. He is a frequent speaker at service clubs, high schools and church groups in his native province, Manitoba.

John Farah -Treasurer

John Farah is an Ottawa lawyer specializing in Corporate, Commercial, Real Estate, Litigation and Small Business matters. John has served on NCCAR's Board of Directors for eight years.

Oussama El-Mohtar -Secretary

Oussama El-Mohtar is a communications consultant working in Ottawa since 1982. His work experience includes consultation for private and public sector business ventures with the Middle East. Mr. El-Mohtar is also a community activist who has lectured and written extensively on relations with the Arab world.

Sine Chadi

Sine Chadi is an entrepreneur with extensive experience in the Alberta real estate and land development industries. He currently owns and operates several companies with real estate assets in Alberta and is the President of Imperial Equities Inc., which is soon to be traded publicly on the Alberta Stock Exchange.

Sine also maintains an active role in community affairs as President of the Canadian Arab Professional and Business Club and is the fundraising chair for a number of charities and community organizations.

Mr. Chadi is also a former member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, where he served for four years in the Liberal Caucus and held positions as Treasurer and Economic Development critic for the Official Opposition. Sine is married to Seham; they have three children.

Khalid Hashem

Dr. Khalid Hashem, of Lebanese origin, is a successful Ottawa dentist. He is widely known throughout the Arab Community in Ottawa for his work towards the social and political development of the community. In addition, he sits on the executive of many local organizations. Dr. Hashem was appointed to the Medical Research Council of Canada in 1995.

Ahlam Masri

Ahlam Masri is an Immigration consultant in Montreal. Mrs. Masri is a native of Lebanon and a mother of three Children. She earned her degree in psychology from Ecole des Lettres (University of Lyon-France), and her Masters in Clinical Psychology in Paris.

Dr. Ismail Zayid

Dr. Ismail Zayid was born, in 1933, in Beit Nuba, Palestine and was educated in Jerusalem. He received a Jordan Government scholarship to study Medicine at Guy's Hospital Medical School, University of London, England. Dr. Zayid graduated in 1958, and undertook specialty training in Pathology at the Postgraduate Medical School, University of London. He served in the Royal Jordanian Army Medical Services, as Director, Dept of Pathology, Main Hospital, Amman, until 1972. Dr. Zayid held the post of Consultant Pathologist, at the Hammersmith Hospital, and Senior Lecturer, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, London 1970-1971.

In 1972, Dr. Zayid was invited to join the staff of the Department of Pathology as an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has been an activist in the Palestinian and Arab cause throughout his life. In 1972, Dr. Zayid became President of the Canada Palestine Association and in 1982 he became President of the Arab Canadian Association of the Atlantic Provinces. From 1988-1995, Dr. Zayid served as a member of the Board of Directors of NECEF and throughout the eighties he played an active role in the Canadian Arab Federation. .

3.0 Programs

3.1 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade -Youth International Internship Program

For the fourth year NCCAR has been selected as one of 43 implementing organisations for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade-Youth International Internship Program (YIIP). Young Canadian university graduates receive an opportunity to gain six months of international work experience. YIIP also promotes cross-cultural learning and understanding in Canada and abroad.

NCCAR has assisted 25 Canadian youth in working and living overseas. Destination countries include Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. By tapping into its broad spectrum of partner organisations in these countries, NCCAR has developed internship positions at the Daily Star-Beirut, the Cairo Times, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the United National High Commission on Refugees, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Al Ahram Weekly, Egypt Today and the Alexandria Library and the Jordan Times.

NCCAR's partner organisations also benefit from this program. They continue to be receptive to hosting highly qualified and talented young Canadians. YIIP has assisted NCCAR in the expansion of its educational programs and in solidifying its cultural, educational and political partnerships in the Arab World.

This year NCCAR placed eight young Canadians with the following organizations:

- Ms. Gariné Tcholakian – Daily Star Beirut, Lebanon
- Mr. Odai Sirri - Cairo Times, Cairo, Egypt
- Ms. Tamam Ahmed Jamma -Al Ahram Weekly, English Edition
- Ms. Rania Hamdan - Arab Parliamentary Union; Damascus, Syria
- Mr. Geoff Cooper - The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA);
Beirut, Lebanon
- Ms. Charmaine Stanley -UNHCR; Cairo, Egypt
- Ms. Rana Ksaifi, UNHCR- Cairo, Egypt
- Mr. Henry Glorieux- United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Beirut, Lebanon

3.2 Youth Parliamentary Internship Program

An important component of NCCAR's Educational Program is its Parliamentary Internship Program which has been in operation since 1996. This program is available to young Canadians of Arab origin who are currently enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary educational institution. NCCAR facilitates a six-week placement with a Member of Parliament thereby providing the intern with exposure to the Canadian political process and invaluable hands-on work experience. This program also serves as an eye opener to young Arab Canadian with regards to the challenges and opportunities for the Arab Canadian community in the Canadian political arena. Budgetary constraints limited NCCAR placements to two interns during 2002.

Mr. George Farah of Hamilton, Ontario who interned with Mr. Toni Valerie, Member of Parliament-Stoney Creek Hamilton and Mr. Mohamad Hamadeh who interned with Mr. Andrew Telegdi, Member of Parliament - Kitchener Waterloo were greatly appreciated by their employers who indicated how impressed they were with their level of professionalism, enthusiasm and ability to learn. Mr. Farah is now in his third year of economics at McMaster University and Mr. Hamadeh is currently a student of political science at Carleton University.

NCCAR is committed to building the capacity of our Arab Canadian community. Coordinating educational programs, such as the Parliamentary Internship Program, is an important instrument used in providing our youth access to different work experience, exposure to the Canadian political process, and opportunity to build lasting friendships with our Members of Parliament and staff.

3.3 Speakers Bureau

NCCAR's Speakers Bureau program provides guest lecturers with access to media and government officials thereby maximizing the breadth and scope of the audience. NCCAR facilitates access to national media including CPAC, Hill Times, CBC Radio and Television, and the Globe and Mail. The Speakers Bureau is often coordinated with other organizations and coalitions such as the Middle East Discussion Group, Middle East Working Group and several other Organizations.

In addition to scheduled public appearances of our guest lecturers, NCCAR arranges meetings with directors and staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Members of Parliament, the Middle East Discussion Group.

This year our guest speakers have addressed issue including economic sanction in Iraq and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In 2002, NCCAR provided assistance to the following speakers:

□ **Scott Ritter-**

Mr. Scott Ritter arrived in Ottawa on the invitation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT). Mr. Ritter is the former chief weapons inspector in Iraq. He has been critical of President Bush's intention to wage war on Iraq. He spoke about his role with UNSCOM and also addressed the issue of lack of evidence to attack Iraq.

□ **Hans Von Sponeck**

Mr. Von Sponeck is the former Coordinator of the Oil for Food Program. He addressed the humanitarian aspects of the sanctions. Mr. Sponeck engaged the editorial board of the Globe and Mail and other media and met with several Members of Parliament. Hans' visit was coordinated in partnership with the Canadian Network to End Sanctions on Iraq (CANESI).

□ **Dennis Halliday**

Mr. Halliday served in Iraq as the Coordinator of the Oil for Food Program. He was the first United Nations official to resign his post in protest of the economic sanctions and has referred to the sanctions as genocidal. He had visited Canada on several occasions to address the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT).

□ **Arch Bishop Badawid**

The Arch Bishop Badawid represents over three million Iraqi Catholics who are scattered around the world. He addressed issues surrounding Iraqi humanitarian concerns and the plight of the Church in Iraq. His message was received positively by the media and government because of his moral standing and credibility.

□ **Mark Ellis**

Professor Ellis is a leading scholar of Jewish Theology and an analyst on Palestinian/Israeli affairs. He lectures extensively on Israeli-Jewish diaspora relations. Basing his criticism on Jewish theological teachings, professor Ellis is considered controversial, and has been accused of perpetuating self hating Jewish messages. This activity was organized with the help of the Carleton Arab Student Association and Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights-Carleton.

□ **Neta Golan and George Rishmawi**

These two speakers were invited by a Canadian human rights group to tour four cities. They discussed the current affairs in Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The two speakers addressed cooperation and collaboration among and between Israelis and Palestinians against the occupation. They also engaged in a discussion on future of Palestine. The national organizers of this tour included CAF, Sabeel, Kairos, MCC, and many other local and international organizations.

□ **Norman Finkelstein**

Professor Finkelstein visited Montreal and Canada discussing his recent book-The Holocaust Industry. In his discussions he outlined his research on the development of US-Israeli relations in the post 1967 war and on how American Jewish elite benefited from the suffering of Holocaust survivors-his parents escaped death in Nazi camps. Mr. Finkelstein is one of the most prominent scholars on the topic of Israeli-American relations and Palestinian suffering. He lived and worked in Palestine during the first Intifada of the 1980's. His tour was coordinated with the Middle East Working Group at Carleton University.

3.4 Institutional Support

This year, NCCAR provided institutional support to several small organizations, community associations and cultural events. This type of support is in keeping with NCCAR's commitment to the social, political and cultural development of the Arab-Canadian community.

Publications

• **Dossier on Palestine:**

It is a collection of essays and reports compiled and collected from different authoritative sources. It is an attempt at providing the curious and the ignorant with facts about the issues, and documents many untold accounts. NCCAR cosponsored the printing and facilitated its distribution under the leadership of Dr. Ismail Zayid.

• **Mission Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to Palestine:**

Ten Members of Parliament visited Palestine on a fact finding mission. The delegation was led by Mrs. Caroline Parrish, and sponsored by the generous donations of Arab community members and some of the delegates. The Delegation documented their findings in a book that was cosponsored by NCCAR and other organizations. It was printed and published by Mr. Ahmad Murad, a long time activist from Ottawa.

Art

- **Artists Against the Occupation:** The exhibition is an international arts initiative started by Japanese artist Mizuko Yakuwa in Tokyo in October 2001 displayed and coordinated by artists from across Canada including: London, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver contributed art work for a group exhibition. It was held at the Forest City Gallery in London, Ontario.
- **Min Zaman:** From long time ago (Arabic translation) is a photo and artifacts exhibition of Canadians of Syrian and Lebanese origin who made Montreal their home. The exhibition was conceived, and executed by Dr. Brian Aboud, a Canadian of Lebanese origin. The display related the stories of those pioneers who settled in Montreal at the turn of the century.

Organizations

- **Arab Cultural House:** Mrs. Halawa, President and founder of Arab Cultural House organized a ground breaking show of Arab costumes from across the Arab Nation. It involved the display and the articulation of the cultural significance of these costumes and tradition. The event was well attended in the Maison culturelle de Montreal and Mr. Hassouna, Ambassador of the Arab League in New York was the guest of honour representing Mr. Amr Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States.
- **Canaanite Canadian Knowledge Centre:** The CCKC is an Ottawa based volunteer run organization that operates small university and library support projects in Gaza-Occupied Palestine. CCKC offers an Honour Scholarship Program for one student a year to go to university of his/her choice.

The Honour Scholarship Program provides assistance for post secondary education for one student each year. The program then asks that student to make a commitment to support another student once they are able to do so. The program hopes to achieve a wider support from the community in Canada.

The second project is the Support a Library project, where volunteer coordinator of CCKC goes to local schools and assesses its library needs and purchases and donates required resources to benefit the whole school.

4.0 Media Bureau

This year NCCAR increased its presence in the media. Whether it be on radio, television or in print, NCCAR continues to be a voice for Canadians who advocate for fair and balanced coverage of social, political and economic events in the Arab World. The principal issues addressed by NCCAR are the impending war on Iraq, U.S. foreign policy for the countries of the Arab world, the Palestinian - Israeli conflict, the lack of objective

reporting with regards to Arab-Canadians, racial profiling of Canadians of Arab origin, and Canada's foreign policy for the region.

The Executive Director and other representatives of NCCAR were interviewed by and provided commentary to the *Globe and Mail*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *National Post*, the *Hill Times*, Reuters News Service, Canada AM, CBC Morning, CTV NewsNet, TV Ontario, CPAC, City TV, Radio Canada International, CFRB Toronto AM, and CHRQ Calgary AM.

Our Executive was engaged in a number of televised debates with groups supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Keith Landy of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Joseph Weilder of the Canadian Israel Committee, David Rosenbloom of B'nai Brith and the Ambassador of Israel debated NCCAR's Executive Director on CBC's Politics with Host Don Newman, CTV's Question Period with hosts Greenspon...., and CPAC with host Peter Van Dusen. NCCAR also made several appearances on CPAC, AOL Canada live chat, CBC, and CTV's Question Period.

In addition to responding to numerous requests made by members of the media, NCCAR proactively pursues balanced reporting by issuing press releases. In recent months, NCCAR press releases have addressed the following political events: the Canadian government's resistance to U.S. pressure to support a war against Iraq; Mr. Izzy Asper's criticism of the Canadian media; and Israeli attacks on Palestinians.

The increased presence of NCCAR in the various media is reflective of the Council's positive working relationship it maintains with members of the Canadian media. This type of work is critical to building bridges of understanding and cooperation between Canada and the Arab World.

4.1 Published

- **National Post:** *No Terror in Text Books*; Mr. Mazen Chouaib published a 500 word essay debunking the insidious claims that the Palestinian authority is teaching school children hate in the text books. The essay relies on the work of Professor Brown of Georgetown University, who conducted a significant study on Palestinian text books, and found that the Palestinian Authority had done a tremendous job in changing the over 50 year old books for a more progressive curriculum.
- **Ottawa Citizen:** letter to the Editor in the defense of Fr. Robert Assaly, Chair of the Canadians Friends of Sabeel, who was attacked for his support of the Palestinians.
- Published a riposte criticizing the accusations that Arab and Muslim cultures have become hate infested, which appeared in a column by Mr. Leonard Stern. The riposte entitled *Israel Continuously rejected Arab Peace Overtures*, highlighted the number of overtures made by Arabs for peace, the last of which was the offer

made by the League of Arab States, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia. It was written by Mr. Mazen Chouaib, executive director, and based on the work of Israeli historians and academics.

- Mr. Chouaib also published an opinion piece titled *Uncle Sam's Song And Dance Campaign*. The essay dealt with misguided perceptions that the Arab World despises American values. It articulated how Arabs revere US values but despise its foreign policy.
- **Hill Times:** published one opinion essay on Iraq titled *Canadian should not support American War on Iraq: the Alliance position is detrimental to Canada*. It critiqued US position on Iraq, analyzed several its policies and argued for maintaining a multilateral/UN position in dealing with Iraq.

4.2 Television

- CBC: Don Newman; CBC: regular programming; CPAC: Ken Rockburn, AOL Canada; CTV, CityTV, Chum, TVO, CHQ-TVA (French channel); CBC French

4.3 Print

- Globe and Mail; Toronto Star; National Post; Hill Times; Ottawa Citizen; Ottawa Sun, Toronto Sun, Montreal Gazette, Canadian Press (wire service), Southam News (wire service); Reuters

4.4 Radio

- CBC, Rutherford Show, CH900,

4.5 Press Conferences

- NCCAR held one press conference this year with the members of the Middle East Working Group on conflict in Palestine at the height of Israeli attacks on Jenin. MEWG presented findings from their representatives on the ground in the Occupied Territories, and presented evidence and recommendations for an urgent Canadian intervention.

4.6 International Media

- NCCAR was increasingly being featured by US and Arab media outlets to present its views on topical issues. We have noticed our opinions being quoted by the following:

Washington Post - U.S
Al Ahram – Egypt
Daily Star – Lebanon
Al Safir – Lebanon
Al Nahar- Lebanon

4.7 Press Release

NCCAR issues press communiqués to bring to attention its concerns and position on certain current events and government policies.

5.0 Government Relations

NCCAR's government relations are critical to the capacity of the organization to affect change. NCCAR provides Canadian government officials, Members of Parliament, Senators, Ministers and bureaucrats with pertinent and timely information in an effort to increase awareness about the views of the Arab-Canadian community, facilitate discussions and expose them to trends in the Arab World.

Some of NCCAR's correspondence and meetings with the government include:

- **Prime Minister Jean Chrétien**
NCCAR communicated with the Prime Minister on several occasions in relation to Iraq and Palestine.
- **Minister of Foreign Affairs**
NCCAR held two meetings with Minister Graham to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. NCCAR board members asked the Minister to work on the implementation of Canada's foreign policy in the region and criticized Canada's voting record at different multilateral UN agencies on Palestine. In our most recent meeting, NCCAR provided the Minister with a thorough presentation on the Settlement debate. We also encouraged Minister Graham to make public statements on the Saudi peace initiative, which was adopted by the League of Arab States in Beirut.
- **Minister of Revenue**
NCCAR met with the Hon. Elinor Caplan, Minister of Revenue to raise concern over the court decision made on the charitable status of the Canadian Friends of David Magan of Israel. This organization operates paramedic and health services infrastructure in the illegal settlements. NCCAR maintains that Canadian law does not permit this organization to issue tax receipts for activities that are contrary to Canada's stated public policy. Although the court upheld the decision of the Ministry of Revenue, its decision was based on a technicality and it stated that the government's public policy was not clear enough. This decision is ambiguous and undermines, in our view, Canadian public policy. This is an issue that we monitor regularly. Our legal advisors are in the process of formulating a legal position to effectively and appropriately deal with this issue.
- **Secretary of State for the Middle East and North Africa**
Upon his appointment, NCCAR held a meeting with Secretary of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Gar Knutson, to provide information and advice on issues related to the Arab World. The meeting was attended by Mr. Bill Janzen-MCC, Mr. Robert Assaly-SABEEL, Mr. Ed Corrigan-City Councilor London and several NCCAR representatives.

- **Bureaucracy**

The work of the staff of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is instrumental for carrying out and developing Canada's foreign policy. In order to ensure that our message is consistently reaching all levels of Government, we hold regular meetings with the Director General, Directors of the Middle East/North Africa and the Gulf Region/Maghreb. We also facilitate expert meetings and briefings with DFAIT, as part of our educational program.

- **Members of Parliament**

NCCAR directs serious efforts to presenting its views on pertinent debates and policy discussions in the Parliament. In preparation for a discussion we provide Members of Parliament with position papers, talking points and expert advice in a timely fashion:

1. Communicated regularly to MPs issues of concern.
2. Prepared two briefs to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade during its deliberation on Iraq.
3. Met on regular basis with over 20 Members of Parliament to discuss varying issues.
4. Supported and facilitated the delegation of Members of Parliament to Palestine and the ensuing report and book signing tour.
5. Provided information and consultations to Members of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights-House of Commons- during its deliberation on the Sudan conflict.
6. Held several meetings with Mr. Stockwell Day and Mr. Rahim Jaafar to discuss the disturbing positions that the Canadian Alliance has taken on the issue of Palestine/Israel in particular and the Arab World in general. It is unfortunate to say that NCCAR remains convinced that Mr. Day lacks knowledge and understanding of the intricate details of the region.

6.0 Community Relations

NCCAR facilitates accessibility to Ottawa -the seat of our Federal Government – for the Arab-Canadian community. By providing a forum for the voice of the Arab-Canadian community, NCCAR is able to effectively deliver the opinions and views of the community to Members of Parliament and government officials.

Keeping with its mission and mandate, NCCAR consults regularly with community leaders and organizations in an effort to better understand their respective views, vision and concerns with regards to issues relating to the Arab World and the Arab-Canadian community. NCCAR also invites members of the community to its meetings with policy makers, government leaders and officials.

7.0 Partnership/Coalitions

NCCAR works with and actively pursues partnerships with international and local organizations committed to peace with justice and international law. NCCAR's partnerships include:

Middle East Working Group (MEWG): The MEWG is a coalition of the Canadian non-government organizations, labour unions and Churches. Some members include CARE Canada, World Vision, ACCC, KAIROS, Sabeel and the MCC. MEWG is currently focused on advocating for peace and development for Palestinians.

Student Organizations: NCCAR supports the Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, the Club du Liban, and the Carleton Arab Student Association.

Canadian Network to End Sanctions on Iraq (CANESI): CANESI is a national ad hoc organization coordinating activities and actions to draw attention to the plight of Iraqi people living under sanctions. CANESI has organized lectureship tours, a cross Canada information caravan, rallies on Parliament Hill and delegations to Iraq.

Women Against Occupation: NCCAR assisted Women Against Occupation in becoming a self-sustaining active group focusing on bringing women's coalition groups and academics together. We provided media contacts and raised awareness of the group among MPs. During their first workshop NCCAR coordinated the visit of a local reporter who provided media expert advice on how to approach and work with media.

Canadian Arab Federation (CAF): In 2002, NCCAR pursued an engagement strategy with major Arab Canadian community organizations in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, and Edmonton. One of the significant achievements this year is a more coordinated effort with the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) - the national umbrella organization representing the interests of Arab Canadians. CAF's membership includes grassroots organizations from across the country and has been expanding quickly in recent times. The Boards of NCCAR and CAF have committed to strengthening cooperation, coalescing and coordinating their efforts in order to ameliorate and benefit the interests of Arab Canadians, avoid duplication of work, and produce an overall enhanced impact on public opinion and public policy.

8.0 Delegations

NCCAR, in its efforts at promoting Arab concerns and to strengthen ties between Arab countries and Canada, travels on yearly basis to consult with different governments, parliamentarians, business associations, and most importantly with national and international non-government organizations.

This year NCCAR traveled to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. We learned a great deal and we are currently in the process of developing new strategies and programs that will improve on already good relations. The discussions were very

significant in terms of the depth of knowledge it gave NCCAR and in bringing to light a number of issues that otherwise are unheard of. For example, it became apparent that Arab governments and people reject the war on Iraq. It also became clear that the proposal by Saudi Arabia for peace in the Middle East, a position adopted unanimously at the March Summit in Beirut of the League of Arab States, was acceptable to the people of the region. A fact hardly reported.

We were also able to observe the impressive political and economic development, which we tend to forget or dismiss when reading daily reports in Canadian and US media. Far from being perfect, or enough, political and economic development dominates agendas in the region. We saw in Saudi Arabia, for example, a strengthening of the Consultative Council and an increase in power and representation. In Yemen, it was evident that there is a surge in local and international NGO activity in areas of social and economic development. Canada is more engaged in Yemen than before and many Canadian companies are interested in economic development.

As a result of these visits, NCCAR is planning to host a conference in fall of 2003 to discuss and highlight areas for Canadian involvement, and devise policy that will improve Canada Arab World relations.

End