

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON
CANADA-ARAB RELATIONS
NCCAR

**ANNUAL REPORT
2003**



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1.0 Executive Summary

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

With these words I ended last year’s executive summary. I am very happy to report that I was right - we surpassed our expectations and your support was instrumental. But, there is more to be done - the demand has increased and the need for NCCAR has multiplied.

In 2003 NCCAR reached a milestone: we now have more office space, three full-time staff and one full-time intern, new equipment and furniture, and several volunteers who are all working cohesively to implement current projects and seeking new ones. Our website has been substantially improved and is being visited on an average of over 20,000 visitors a month.

NCCAR recognizes that our outreach activities were weak at best, and absent at worst. This year we met with groups and organizations in Montreal, London, Edmonton and Calgary. Next year we will be visiting Vancouver, Nova Scotia, Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, and London.

NCCAR directors and staff are in regular contact with members of parliament, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Office of the Solicitor General, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Office of the Privy Council. We are also consulting with Arab governments, NGOs, Parliamentarians, media, and academics.

Public debates regarding the war on Iraq took significant energy from our office. Our spokespeople were featured on many shows in English and French Canada, international media, and in making presentations to the Canadian government to ensure that Canada did not support the war. Thankfully, Canadians rejected the war and our government’s decision reflected those voices. NCCAR’s was consistent in its position that a war on Iraq will fuel more terrorism and will undermine international law. The overwhelming majority of Canadians agreed with us.

Our Lectureship Bureau hosted and organized the visits of Mr. Amr Moussa-Secretary General of the League of Arab States - and Ms. Diana Buttu-legal advisor to the PLO Negotiating Team. This was achieved due to our partnership with the Union of Egyptians Abroad, the Canadian Arab Federation, NECEF, IWPG, Medical Aid for Palestine and many others.

NCCAR was very successful at articulating and communicating effectively with Canadian and International media this year. You will note from this report that our Media Bureau was creative and successful in reaching Canadians and decision-makers nationally and internationally. ArabiCa, NCCAR’s newsletter, is published regularly and

on time. Our bi-weekly electronic information bulletin reaches out to thousands of Canadians.

Our fundraising capacity has improved significantly. We raised funds from Canadian companies working in the Arab region and both our members and friends have been more generous this year. We also increased our membership base. However, we continue to operate on a very small and tight budget. We require more support from our friends. NCCAR needs to increase the number of its sustaining members (donations of \$500 and above) as well as regular memberships.

We organized a substantive and important meeting with Mr. Paul Martin, the current Prime Minister-designate of Canada, on July 2. At the meeting members of the Arab community from across the country were present. The participants debated Mr. Martin's announced domestic and international policies. They all left feeling that Mr. Martin will take into consideration the views and interests of NCCAR. However, we need to ensure that his promises are fulfilled.

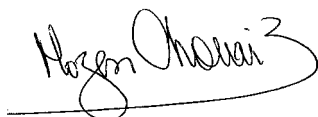
There are special thanks that need to go out to many of our friends and long time supporters. I will mention some of whom without their support and dedication NCCAR would have failed in delivering its objectives.

Ian Watson's unparalleled dedication to NCCAR and sound advice continues to be instrumental; Emile Khouri's dedication and corporate memory are unparalleled, and, Bill Lawand's tireless energy and advocacy of NCCAR remain profoundly important. Mr. Mamdouh Ismail, President of the Union of Egyptians Abroad, has been and continues to be equally instrumental. A special thank you also goes to our dedicated board whose advice and - above all - commitment and vision allowed for this growth. I want to especially recognize the staff of the Council - past and present - who worked with me to make this organization a successful one; Rania Karam, Suzanne Taylor-Forbes, Samer Abboud, Rania Hamdan, Jennifer Gearey, and Mohammed Zigby. A special thank you goes to the dedicated volunteers who tolerated the difficult working conditions at NCCAR.

2004 appears to be challenging. We have already planned several activities and events which will attract the attention of Canadians and Arabs alike. Towards the end of this report you will find our planned activities. We can only do this with your assistance.

On behalf of NCCAR and its Board Members I thank you for your continued support. And I promise that 2004 NCCAR will be more successful at educating Canadians about the Arab World and building bridges of understanding and cooperation.

There is a lot to be done and we need your support.



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 NCCAR.

2.1 Mission Statement

**NCCAR is a non-profit organization 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

**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.
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. 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, organizations, 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 organizations 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 interns 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 a 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 of 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 on the social and political development of the community. In addition, he sits as an executive with 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 fifth year NCCAR has been selected as one of 43 implementing organizations 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. The YIIP - which runs from September to March - also promotes cross-cultural learning and understanding in Canada and abroad.

So far NCCAR has placed 33 Canadian youths overseas. Destination countries include Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt. By tapping into its broad spectrum of partner organizations in these countries, NCCAR has developed internship positions at the Daily Star in 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, La gazette du maroc, Egypt Today and the Alexandria Library and the Jordan Times.

NCCAR's partner organizations 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.

For security reasons we were forced to be cautious with our country selection. This year NCCAR placed eight young Canadians with the following organizations:



- ❑ Francis Clermont, la Gazette du Maroc, Casablanca
- ❑ Christl Dabu, Egypt Today, Cairo
- ❑ Salimah Ebrahim, The Cairo Times, Cairo
- ❑ Chris Walker, The Cairo Times, Cairo
- ❑ Jacqueline Tunistra, Egypt Today, Cairo
- ❑ Mohammed Zigby, NCCAR, Ottawa
- ❑ Jaideep Mukerji, Al Ahram, Cairo
- ❑ Mary K. Keown, ADEW, Cairo

3.2 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 origins that are currently enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary educational institution. NCCAR facilitates a six-week placement from May to June 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 Canadians with regards to the challenges and opportunities for the Arab Canadian community in the Canadian political arena. **Due to budgetary constraints this year we were not able to place any interns with MPs. We are seeking new and creative ways to find the required funds to host 5-10 interns in the summer of 2004.**

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 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.

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, schools of journalism and faculties of law, and we also open it to large public gatherings.

Secretary General of the Arab League: Mr. Amr Moussa



The first ever visit of a head of the Arab League was a resounding success. In Ottawa Mr. Moussa held meetings with Prime Minister Mr. Jean Chretien and Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham. Following his meeting with Mr. Graham they addressed a press conference where Canada condemned Israel's separation wall for the first time. Mrs. Susan Whealan, Minister of International Cooperation, joined Mr. Graham and Mr. Moussa for lunch where they discussed CIDA support for

Arab countries. Mr. John Manley, the Minister of Finance, also met with Mr. Moussa. Their meeting was very positive and opened new channels of communication between Canada and the League. He appeared in front of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade which is currently studying Canada's relations with the Muslim world.

Mr. Moussa traveled to Toronto after Ottawa where he met with members of the Canada Arab Business Council. He was interviewed by Mr. Brian Stewart for the CBC's Foreign Assignment show and Anna-Maria Tremonti also held a long radio conversation with Mr. Moussa. Before that he had meetings with the editorial boards of the Globe and Mail and National Post. The Arab community in Toronto organized a reception and a dinner with Mr. Moussa. Prior to that there was a substantive and large meeting with community organizations to discuss linkages between the Diaspora and the League.

In Montreal Mr. Moussa met with members of the Arab media. The Union of Egyptians Abroad organized a large reception for Mr. Moussa where he addressed the Arab community.

Mrs. Diana Buttu and Mr. Oren Medicks: October 9-22

Ms. Buttu is a legal advisor to the PLO on the peace process. She works out of the Occupied Territories as part of a team of young lawyers who have been leaving their mark on the Israeli/Palestine conflict. Ms. Buttu has a unique perspective on the question of peace between the two people. Canadian-born and raised in Toronto and of Palestinian refugee parents, Diana traveled to the Occupied Territories hoping to make a difference. Now she finds herself having to speak, in her unique eloquence and thirst for justice, to the world that Palestine will remain occupied as long as the world is silent. She passionately, yet logically, described that each Israeli action is furthering hate and dealing a blow to any future reconciliation between the two people.

NCCAR organized a tour for Diana Buttu that was both unique in terms of its approach and reach as well as thorough. Ms. Buttu visited Toronto, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Montreal and Ottawa, accompanied by the equally passionate and committed Israeli activist Oren Medicks of Gush Shalom.

They addressed activists, members of the Jewish community, students, a number of faculty of law and schools of journalism.

Diana Buttu met with the Department of Foreign Affairs, addressed members of parliament, was interviewed by CBC's Peter Mansbridge and CPAC, exchanged views with the editorial boards of the Globe and Mail, National Post, and Toronto Star. With Mr. Medicks they reached some audiences that never had a chance of hearing the reality of occupation and the hopes and aspirations of peoples tired of war and walls.

The support and partnership with the following organizations was instrumental to the success of this tour:

NECEF (Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation), IWPS (International Women's Peace Service) and Bloor Street United Church.

Co-sponsors:

The Coalition for Just Peace in Israel/Palestine, IWPS (International Women's Peace Service), CAF (Canadian Arab Federation), CAW-Gindin Chair in Social Justice at Ryerson, JYATO (Jewish Youth Against the Occupation), SfP (Science for Peace), Coalition Against War and Racism (CAWR), Latin American Bolivarian Circle of Toronto, Creative Response, JWCEO (Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation), Salaam Toronto: Queer Muslim Community, WfP (Women for Palestine), Al Awda--Palestine Right to Return Coalition, Tikkun Toronto, (MCC) Muslim Canadian Congress, WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), Peace and Social Action Committee--Toronto Friends Meeting, SPHR York (Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights), SPHR Montreal, WAO (Women Against the Occupation) Ottawa, Ryerson Arab Students' Association, Yosher (Jews for Social Justice), IDRF (International Development and Relief Fund), Women in Black, Solidarité pour les droits

humains des palestiniens (SDHP) UQAM, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) McGill, Canadian Palestinian Foundation, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) Concordia, Parole Arabe, Jewish Alliance Against the Occupation, McGill Radical Law School, Quebec Public Interest Group (QPIRG) McGill, Amnesty Montréal

Honourable Gar Knutson, Minister of State for the Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East: November 5, 2003



NCCAR - in partnership with the Canadian Arab Professional and Community Associations (CAPCA) of Ottawa - organized a meeting between the Secretary of State and members of the Ottawa Arab Canadian community. Mr. Knutson explored with the community Canada's position in the region, efforts, and offered his observations, and demanded honesty from the audience.

Mr. Knutson heard from the participants of the fear that exists in the community. He learned of problems with racial profiling, cases of discrimination in the work place, of opposition to Canada's apparent disinterest in a meaningful role in the Middle East. Mr. Knutson faced the challenging questions and was not shy from accepting the blame and explaining some of the misconceptions. But he also acknowledged some of the constraints under which Canadian policy makers operate.

Professor Susan Akram, Boston University Professor of Law: December 3-4

In a joint effort the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations and the Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange (CEPAL) hosted Boston University Professor Susan Akram's lectureship tour in Ottawa on December 3rd and 4th. During the two days Professor Akram met with various government departments to discuss the situation of Palestinian refugees within the context of international law. Moreover, she was interviewed by Canada Public Access Channel and the Ottawa Citizen where she delivered her message of revising past interpretations of international legal conventions and resolutions to enhance protection and representation of Palestinian refugees.

Akram argued there a discrepancy in the application of international law vis-à-vis the Palestinians when comparing their case to other refugee cases. She cited the cases of Bosnia, Korea, Rwanda and Pakistan-India (Partition) in which refugees were guaranteed basic rights not afforded to Palestinian refugees. The tour also included a CEPAL-organized event on December 3rd on Parliament Hill which was highlighted by a lecture by Professor Akram. She reiterated the centrality of international law in seeking any durable and lasting solution to the refugee crisis – a crisis which continues to be a sticking point in present, and possibly, future negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

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.

- **Artists Against the Occupation:** The exhibition is an international arts initiative started by Japanese artist Mizuko Yakuwa in Tokyo in October 2001. It was displayed and coordinated by artists from across Canada including London, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver who contributed art work for a group exhibition. This year the exhibition was held in Montreal during the month of October.

4.0 Media Bureau

NCCAR increased its presence in the media by leaps and bounds. Whether on radio, television or in print NCCAR continues to be a voice for Canadians who advocate a fair and balanced coverage of social, political and economic events in the Arab World. The principal issues addressed by NCCAR were 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 in 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: Joseph Weilder of the Canadian Israel Committee, David Rosenbloom of B'nai Brith and the Ambassador of Israel. NCCAR also made several appearances on CBC and CTV's Question Period, and CPAC with host Peter Van Dusen and Ken Rockburn.

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; and Israeli attacks on Palestinians and Syria.

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

4.1 Published Works:

- **Libya: Canada's policy on Libya**
- **Debating the Road Map: The Occupation is the Problem; National Post, August 18, 2003**
- **A Legitimate Arabic Voice: Al-Jazeera is a tool for dialogue; Montreal Gazette, May 2, 2003**
- **Interaction with Arab people and Nations is Now Essential; The Hill Times, May 5, 2003**
- **Canadian Alliance position on Iraq is detrimental to Canada; Hill Times, Feb 2003**

Media Interviews:

CTV Canada AM discussion with Lisa Laflamme and Mr. Keith Landy of B'Nai Brith December 28, 2002 Globe and Mail comments on B'Nai Brith adding more names to the list of banned organizations; January 6, 2003; CTV Net commenting on Suicide bombings in Israel QTS (French) commenting on increasing prevalence of Muslims changing the names of their children to Christian ones January 6, 2003; January 7, 2003; CTV news-commenting on the FBI bungle over the five suspected terrorists on January 7, 2003.

Customary to its anti-Arab editorials and policies the National Post, on January 14, 2003, ran an editorial liable to Mr. Chouaib. The editorial made reference to the comments made by Mazen Chouaib in which he questioned the motives of Mr. Aspers' calling for the expulsion of the Ambassador of Lebanon. A week later the National Post ran an unsatisfactory retraction.

4.2 Television

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

4.3 Radio

- CBC, Rutherford Show, CH900,

4.4 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

4.5 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

4.6 Press Releases

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

This year NCCAR issued 13 press releases dealing with issues ranging from Palestinian struggle for peace and justice, to the cancellation of Air Canada flights to Lebanon and many other topics.

4.7 *e-Arabica* : NCCAR's Bi-Weekly Electronic Newsletter

As of June NCCAR began publishing its bi-weekly e-newsletter. It is one of the many informative tools at our disposal that gives a glimpse of life in Ottawa. E-ArabiCa offers information and informs the public of debates in the House of Commons, DFAIT programs, policy issues, media monitoring and NCCAR activities.

4.8 *ArabiCa*: NCCAR's Quarterly Newsletter

This year ArabiCa was published in a timely manner. It covered our activities and issues related to Canadian foreign policy. ArabiCa is available online.

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:

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

6.0 Members of Parliament

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

On May 7th Mazen Chouaib addressed the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade which is dealing with the question of Canada's relations with the Muslim World. The study is continuing into the New Year, where the Committee is meeting with experts and leaders across the world. It is a positive step in ensuring that Canada's relationship with the countries and people of the Muslim and Arab world is based on mutual understanding.

We furnished 301 members of parliament with information on Israel's Wall and its effects on the Palestinian people.

7.0 Policy Submissions

7.1 Iraq: Conflict with the US: A Canadian Perspective

A policy position we presented to DFAIT, Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister's Office. We believe that our effort along with others was significant in ensuring that Canada did not join the War on Iraq.

7.2 Sudan:

Following the appointment of Senator Mobina Jaafar to the position Canada's Peace Envoy to the IGAD peace process NCCAR held several meetings with the Senator to discuss the Canadian role and policy in the Sudan. We presented her with a position paper dealing with NCCAR's view of the conflicted country and our views on how best to be involved in ensuring peace and the return of stability to the country.

8.0 Paul Martin

The meeting brought together representatives of NCCAR, its members, affiliated organizations and businesses from the Montreal community for a frank and open discussion with Mr. Martin. Over 20 prominent business leaders and organizations from the Montreal area who met with Mr. Martin included the Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association, Canadian Palestinian Foundation, Canadian Islamic Congress, Association of London Muslims, St. George's Anitochian Church, Union Maronite de Montreal, Islamic Centre of Southwestern Ontario, and the American University of Beirut Alumni Association.

9.0 Youth

In May five NCCAR youth volunteers had the opportunity to meet with officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) Middle East and North Africa Division. Among those who attended were Kamiliya Abbas, 21, Youssef Masrieh, 27, Ola Madi, 21, Anissia Nasr, 21, Samer Abboud, 25, as well as NCCAR's new Office Manager Rania Hamdan. The first of these planned monthly meetings between DFAIT officials and youth volunteers was a successful event which covered such diverse issues as human rights, and literacy and education throughout the Arab world. All participants were extremely encouraged by the awareness of DFAIT officials to these and other important social issues confronting the Arab world, particularly those issues outlined in the United Nations Arab Human Development Report published last year. Other important points of discussion included Canada's representation in the Arab world, the operations of foreign embassies and the multilateral aspects of Canadian-Arab relations.

10.0 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:

10.1 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 focusing on advocating peace and development for Palestinians.

Several issues dominated our advocacy work this year. In keeping with our interest in improving Canada-Arab world relations, NCCAR focused a substantial amount of energy advocating a bigger development aid package for Yemen. We also urged the government to open a Canadian diplomatic mission in the country to serve Canada's interest.

As a result Canada appointed a Foreign Service officer to work from our embassy in Saudi Arabia solely on the Yemeni file. This official will be spending considerable amount of time in Yemen to learn more and assist in focusing Canadian policy with this poor, but yet significant, trading partner.

11.0 Outstanding Issues

11.1 Libya

Following the removal of United Nations sanctions that were imposed on Libya following the Lockerbie disaster, Canada and Libya reestablished their diplomatic relations. But the relationship continues to be plagued by challenges which NCCAR is helping to mediate. For example, until recently the Canadian embassy in Tripoli did not have a consular section. This has recently changed. NCCAR worked tirelessly to encourage Canadian officials to establish an immigration section to help facilitate trade with the country as well as to ensure that the over 1000 Canadians working in the country had access to consular services.

Today, Canada-Libyan relations are positively improving. Canadian officials and Ministers have traveled repeatedly to Libya where they held substantive meetings with their counterparts. On December 8 a Canadian business delegation led by Minister of State Denis Paradis and organized by the Canada Arab Business Council will be traveling on a two- day business trip.

11.2 Air Canada

In June Canadians traveling to Lebanon on the newly established direct Air Canada flight to Beirut were shocked by the unexpected announcement of the termination of the flight. The decision by the Solicitor General to stop the flights one day before the intended scheduled departure sent Canadians and the airline scrambling to find

alternative travel arrangements. Over fourteen thousand bookings were cancelled. Air Canada suffered a significant loss from this lucrative route which is estimated at eighty thousand customers.

But most importantly this decision underlined two issues: Canada was acting under pressure from the United States and it sent a signal that Canada does not trust the Lebanese Government's capacity to protect our national carrier. This is a decision NCCAR finds troubling and is continuing to work to revoke. We do not believe that it will happen in the short-term but we will continue to pressure the government to change its decision.

11.3 Museum of Civilizations

In one of the most bizarre cases of apparent discrimination against Arabs in Canada the Museum of Civilizations abruptly terminated the Arab world program. (The decision was a reversal of the announced and articulated objectives of the Museum's charter; namely, to foster understanding and appreciation of Canadian multiculturalism.) The management of the Museum continues to ignore the calls from Canadians to reverse its decision.

12.0 Delegations

In its efforts to promote Arab concerns and to strengthen ties between Arab countries and Canada NCCAR travels on a 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 and Morocco. 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 were unheard of. The visit to Egypt resulted in the successful implementation and coordination of the visit of the Secretary General of the Arab League to Canada. The visit also resulted in the successful implementation of our internship program.

We were also able to observe 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.

As a result of these visits, NCCAR is planning to host a conference in winter of 2004 to discuss and highlight areas for Canadian involvement and devise policy that will improve Canada-Arab World relations. We are also planning to invite a delegation of MPs to Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in June 2004.

13.0 2004 Planned Activities

Speakers Bureau:

February

Speaker: Najat Al-Hajjaji
Chairwoman of UN Commission on Human Rights
Topic: Development in Libya
City: Ottawa

Speaker: Khalid Al Dakhil
Professor at King Fahd University and Fellow at Carnegie Endowment Fund
Topic: Development in Saudi Arabia
Cities: Ottawa and Toronto

March

Speaker: Robert Malley
Former US negotiator and President of International Crisis
Topic: Middle East Peace
Cities: Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto

April

First Annual Conference: Canada and the Arab World

June

Topic: Arab World Affairs-
Speaker: TBD
Cities: Edmonton and Calgary

September

Topic: Development in Morocco
Speaker: TBD

October

Topic: Development in Tunisia
Speaker: TBD

November

Development in Algeria
Speaker: TBD

End