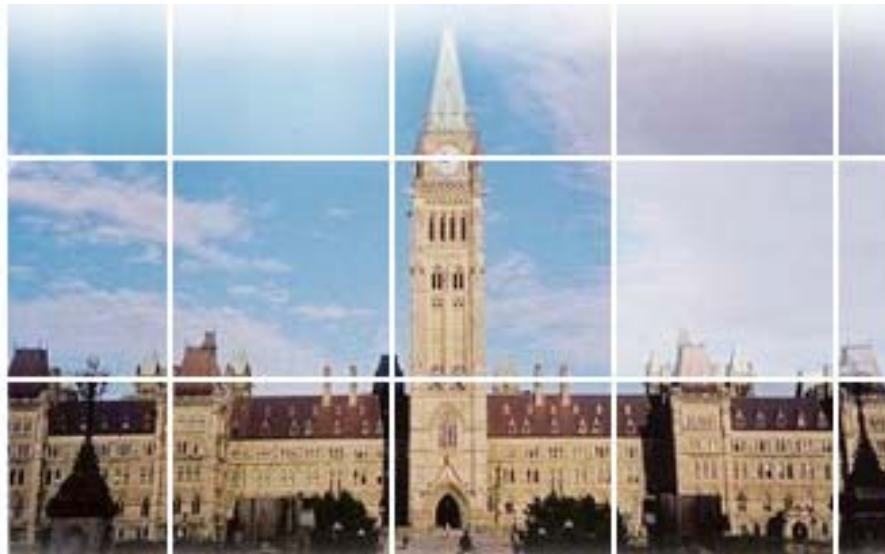


**The National Council on
Canada-Arab Relations
NCCAR**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2004**



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1.0 Executive Summary

I am honoured to present to NCCAR members the 2004 annual report. I hope that it will meet your approval.

Twenty years ago, the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations was born out of the basement of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Montreal. Although we have transformed since then, our work revolves around the original idea of the founders: building bridges of understanding and cooperation between Canada and the Arab region. In 2004, we traversed a great distance on that bridge and we look to 2005 to continue our journey.

The Arab-Canadian community has been faced with increased racial profiling and biased media coverage since the September 11th terrorist attacks against the United States, and Canadians in general have seen a shifting foreign policy. At NCCAR, we have chosen to work harder to face these challenges. Therefore, when you leaf through the pages of this report, I am confident you will be impressed by what we have achieved.

NCCAR met twice with Prime Minister Paul Martin to discuss the concerns of Canadians about the Arab region in political, economic, cultural and security matters. We also met, on numerous occasions with the minister of Foreign Affairs to advise on constructive policy-making for the Arab region and to promote Canadian values such as respect for international law. We organized meetings with the government for Ambassador Najat Hajjji of Libya (former chairwoman of the UN Human Rights Commission) and Mr. Khalil Shikaki of Palestine. In addition, we met members of parliament and senators, and conveyed our message to other government officials in Canada and the Arab world.

During our May meeting with the prime minister we urged him to seize the opportunity presented by Libya’s decision to open up to the international community by travelling to Libya. We are very pleased that, along with the encouragement of our friends in the business community, the PM visited Libya in late December. NCCAR encourages greater interaction between Canadian officials and their Arab counterparts.

Our Educational Program was successful and busy in 2004. We placed 22 young Canadians in Arab countries including Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. They are Canada’s ambassadors to the Middle East. Their work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media in the region brings a positive message of friendship and openness. This enables them to learn about the different cultures and the genuine interest for peace in the region while appreciating the hospitality of the area. It is thanks to the support of Foreign Affairs Canada that we are able to conduct this program.

The Speakers’ Bureau was also successful this year with three tours organized in cities across Canada. Rev. Naim Ateek of Palestine, Mr. Michael Tarazi of Palestine and Dr. Uri Davis of

Israel, spoke on numerous issues related to justice and international law.

NCCAR's Media Bureau was equally busy and pro-active. This year we published opinion pieces, presented our perspective to numerous media outlets, and encouraged a more thoughtful and educated approach to understanding the Arab region. Our communications officer was busy promoting stories and opinions, working with the media to find appropriate spokespeople, and providing studies and information.

The success of NCCAR is measured by its ability to present its opinions to the public, the recognition by government and media as the voice of Canadians on the Arab region, and most importantly, obtaining the support of its membership. So far, we have achieved all of this and more. NCCAR is a voice that most Canadians agree with, our views and opinions take Canada's interests and welfare above any other country. At the request of Foreign Affairs Canada, NCCAR represented Canadian civil society at the Support Forum for the G8 Initiative for the Greater Middle East and North Africa. We were present at the first meeting on September 23 in New York.

This year we were faced with a significant financial challenge. We lost some funding that jeopardised our programs and ability to respond to the increased demand in Canada. We are rectifying this problem with the help of Flagship Solutions, a fundraising company. Through Flagship we have applied for funding from several sources and have reorganised our marketing materials. We expect to see results in the first quarter of 2005.

We are looking forward to next year as NCCAR celebrates its 20th anniversary. We have, along with our on-going programs, an exciting list of activities planned for 2005. We are also eagerly anticipating the next 20 years of serving Canadians.

I would like to thank all of those who are helping us reach our goal and fulfill our objectives. Most importantly, I thank my colleagues whose dedication and commitment to NCCAR is becoming legendary. They include Rania Hamdan and Mohamad Zigby who moved on to new horizons in September, Annik Lussier, Maisa Tohme, Essam Farag, as well as the volunteers and board members.

Our most sincere thanks to our members and friends for your continued support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mazen Chouaib". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mazen Chouaib
Executive Director

2.0 Mission

NCCAR was established in 1985 by Canadians who believe that our national interest is best served through expanded knowledge as well as social, scientific and educational exchange with the Arab world.

2.1 NCCAR Objectives

NCCAR works with governments, the private sector and community organizations to promote and assist programs that increase Canadian awareness and knowledge of the Arab world, and to encourage the expansion of commercial, scientific, educational and cultural links between Canadian and Arab institutions.

2.2 NCCAR Fundamental Beliefs

NCCAR's objective is based on the following three beliefs:

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

2.3 NCCAR Activities

- ❖ Promoting greater recognition of the social, economic, political and cultural contribution of Arab-Canadians to Canada
- ❖ Providing information related to the Arab world to individuals, organizations, educational institutions, libraries, media, as well as Canadian provincial and federal governments
- ❖ Publishing a bi-weekly 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, as well as educational programs and upcoming events
- ❖ Promoting speakers that provide information on the Arab world
- ❖ Sponsoring study tours and speaker tours between Canada and the Arab world
- ❖ Sponsoring and coordinating the NCCAR Parliamentary Internship Program for Arab-Canadian university students
- ❖ Coordinating the Youth International Internship program for Canadian youth placed in Arab countries
- ❖ Supporting cultural and historical exhibitions between Canada and the Arab world

2.4 Board of Directors

Hussein M. Amery (President) is an international development professional specializing in project design and delivery in the developing world. Mr. Amery is the senior advisor for business development for the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and the managing partner of Integrated Development Enterprise Associates (IDEA). He serves as senior technical advisor on a number of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and World Bank-assisted projects and supports capacity-building activities at Canadian organizations and firms.

The former manager for Business Development with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), Mr. Amery has worked in more than thirty countries throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Americas, designing and implementing over 20 large-value projects. He is an international development professional and expert on Middle Eastern affairs. Mr. Amery's deep knowledge of the area has been developed over the past 15 years working in the field extensively, and in conjunction with donor agencies, the World Bank and United Nations organizations, such as UNRWA, UNDP and ESCWA, and as the current President of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations.

David Comerford (Treasurer) With over 20 years of international development experience, Mr. Comerford has worked for several Canadian and international NGOs including CBIE, UNAC, Oxfam-Quebec and CCIC. He has lived and studied for more than seven years in Egypt and Tunisia and has travelled extensively in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. He is currently the director of External Relations at CUSO, the largest cooperant-volunteer sending agency in Canada. Mr. Comerford takes great interest in Canadian public and foreign policy.

Rsmeya Hammoud (Secretary) is a legal assistant at the Duncan & Company law firm in Calgary, Alberta. She works in the civil litigation branch and has extensive experience in various litigation areas. Rsmeya has served on a number of boards and is an active volunteer in Calgary. She enjoys being active in community affairs and takes an interest in various events to educate and promote community activities.

Sine Chadi is chairman of Imperial Equities Inc. and the company's chief executive officer. From day one, Mr. Chadi has been the principal driver of the company and has overseen all day-to-day aspects of Imperial's growth and development. He brings more than 20 years of professional experience in the real-estate sector to Imperial. He is also the founder and principal shareholder of North American Mortgage Corp., as well as of numerous other companies involved in the acquisition, redevelopment and disposition of real estate assets. Mr. Chadi also sat as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta from 1993 to 1997. He represented his caucus on a number of the Legislature's economic development, public accounts and treasury committees.

Mr. Chadi is also an active community leader and fundraiser for a number of community groups including the Boys and Girls Clubs and Crystal Kids. He received the Honorary Chinese Citizen Award for his philanthropic work with the Asian community in Edmonton.

Charles Ghorayeb is the CEO and founder of Emballage Chataugay, a multinational corporation with offices in Montreal and Asia. Mr. Ghorayeb is a long-time organizer in Quebec with a keen interest in helping the Arab-Canadian community integrate and participate within the Canadian political process.

He is a philanthropist and active supporter of local charities. Mr Ghorayeb is also studying law at l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

Mamdouh Ismail is the CEO of Compagnie internationale de construction et d'industrie (CICI). CICI is an international company with offices in Canada, Africa and the Middle East. Mr. Ismail is a long-time activist in the Arab community in Canada. He is the president of the Union of Egyptians Abroad and the Egyptian Community of Canada.

Edmond Omran is the founder and president of Medical Aid For Palestine, an organization dedicated to helping Palestinians in their medical and health needs. Mr. Omran is a long-time organizer in Quebec.

Bahija Réghaï has extensive experience in the area of human rights, community development, and intercultural training. She has worked and travelled extensively in Africa, Europe and North America. She brings in over 20 years of community and NGO experience. She is a vice-president and founding member of the Arab Canadian Women Association (ACWA) of Ottawa, first co-chair of Al-Awda-Canada, a member of the Advisory Council of the Across Boundaries Multifaith Institute (ABMI) Montreal, and vice-president of the Coalition of Arab Professional and Community Associations (CAPCA) of Ottawa.

Dr. Ismail Zayid was born in 1933 in Beit Nuba, Palestine, and was educated in Jerusalem. He received a scholarship from the Jordanian government 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. After a number of high-level appointments, he was appointed as chief of service, Division of Anatomical Pathology, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax from 1994 until his retirement in 1996. He has contributed extensively, both on a national and international level, in teaching and researching in the fields of Breast and Gynaecologic Pathology.

In addition to his stellar medical career, Dr. Zayid has been an activist for the Palestinian and Arab cause. He has published two books and many articles on the issue. Since 1978, he has served as president of the Canada Palestine Association and, since 1982, as president of the Arab Canadian Association of the Atlantic Provinces. He has also served on the NECEF board and played an active role in the Canadian Arab Federation in the eighties.

2.5 Staff

Mazen Chouaib: Executive Director

Ian Watson: Senior Advisor

Annik Lussier: Communications and Projects Coordinator

Maisa Tohme: Administrative Assistant

Essam Farag: Special Projects Coordinator

3.0 Education Programmes

A) Young Professionals International

NCCAR selected 22 young Canadians interested in gaining professional experience in the Middle East for its Young Professionals International (YPI) program, under the auspices of Foreign Affairs Canada.

YPI gives Canadian youth a first paid career-related international work experience through 6-12 months placements in some 115 countries in all regions of the world. It is part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy.

This is the sixth year NCCAR has been organizing these internships. NCCAR YPI placements are exciting and are excellent learning opportunities for career development. The Council's wide network of contacts has facilitated the creation of new placements in prestigious organizations. The following is a list of the organizations hosting our participants in 2004-2005.

- ❖ **The Daily Star (Independent Daily Newspaper)**
Beirut, Lebanon
James Fitz-Morris & Rym Tina Ghazal
- ❖ **Parliament of Lebanon**
Beirut, Lebanon
Michel Baumier
- ❖ **Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women**
Cairo, Egypt
Lindsay Tabah, Brigitte Boily & Mary K. Keown
- ❖ **Egypt Today (Magazine)**
Cairo, Egypt
Danna Farhang, Jacqueline Tunistra & Christl Dabu
- ❖ **La revue d'Égypte (Magazine)**
Cairo, Egypt
Sarah-Eve Hammond
- ❖ **Cairo Times (Magazine)**
Cairo, Egypt
Chris Walker
- ❖ **Al Ahram Weekly (Newspaper)**
Cairo, Egypt
Jennifer Evans & Jaideep Mukerji
- ❖ **Supreme Constitutional Court**
Cairo, Egypt
Hala Rashed

❖ **La Gazette du Maroc (Magazine)**

Rabat, Morocco
Olivier Asselin & Francis Clermont

❖ **Centre d'études sur le Canada de l'Université d'Oujda**

Oujda, Morocco
Roberta Gramlich

❖ **Réalités (Magazine)**

Tunis, Tunisia
Amélie Tendland

"This internship has been a landmark in my personal and professional life. The journalism and work skills I have developed during the past several months have been astounding. My research, interview and writing skills have been honed to produce well-rounded and, hopefully, interesting stories for the public. The knowledge and training I have acquired while at the Jordan Times have challenged me to be a better-informed and more-nuanced writer. It has given me the opportunity to practice the intricate skill of journalism in a captivating country, meeting remarkable people." – Sarah Ryan

NCCAR'S partner organizations also benefit from this program and continue to be receptive to hosting highly qualified Canadian youth of all backgrounds.

What's more, the participants return to Canada with a clearer view of the region and share their experiences in their communities.

B) Youth Parliamentary Internship Program

An important component of NCCAR's Educational Program is the Parliamentary Internship Program. Since 1996, the Council has facilitated a six-week placement from May to June with a member of parliament for a dozen young Canadians of Arab origin enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary institution. The program is meant to encourage young Arab-Canadians to participate in the Canadian political process. The program operates thanks to generous donations provided through the Gordon Battah Memorial Internship as well as funds provided by the Canadian Arab Professional and Business Club of Edmonton. The 2004 participants were:

❖ **Office of Pat O'Brien, MP (Liberal-London Fanshaw)**

Participant: Fatima Mahfouz, Bilingual Commerce, University of Alberta

❖ **Office of Alexa McDonough, MP (NDP-Halifax)**

Participant: Ameera Basmadji, English and Peace Studies, McMaster University

"My internship with NCCAR has given me the chance to actually work in the nerve centre of Canada and be a part of Canada's foreign policies. It has been a luxury for me to work with some of the greatest and well-respected individuals in Ottawa. I have had the opportunities to work with Alexa McDonough, a leading peace advocate and international development critic; Monia Mazigh, a courageous and passionate woman running for MP; National Democratic Party headquarters, to help establish a well-fought campaign addressing Canadian needs. I value these experiences for they lay the foundation for a future career in international politics." – Ameera Basmadji

NCCAR recognizes the importance of participation by the Arab-Canadian community in the political process by creating solid ties with members of Parliament and staff. Programs such as these will also ensure a legacy of Arab-Canadian involvement in political affairs at the federal level.

C) Journalism Apprenticeships

Every year, NCCAR takes on two students from Carleton University's journalism program to offer them a glimpse into media efforts aimed at improving Canada-Arab relations. The interns help write news releases, contact media and help write articles for the newsletter during their two-week stay. The 2004 participants were Amanda Quinn and Kristina Roic.

D) Cultural Exchange Program

NCCAR's Cultural Exchange Program provides a unique opportunity for Arab-Canadian youth to learn about and reconnect with their Arab heritage. In July, NCCAR, with the League of Arab States and the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, coordinated five summer cultural exchange placements hosted by the Lebanese Directorate General of Emigrants. The youth visited popular tourist sites and took part in seminars and excursions offered at the 8th Annual Lebanese Emigrant Youth Camp. The program also aims to strengthen cooperation between young native Arabs and Arab emigrants from various backgrounds.

E) Speakers' Bureau

2004 Speakers' Bureau activities have been successful at bringing high-profile speakers to Canada to discuss Arab world issues and help educate Canadians as well as government officials. Speakers habitually give public lectures, take part in media interviews and meet with Foreign Affairs Canada, members of Parliament, Privy Council Office (PCO) officials, members of the Middle East Discussion Group, as well as International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) managers. Through our wide network of contacts, NCCAR arranges these meetings and coordinates with other organizations to prepare the lecture tour.



Dr. Uri Davis—From September 13-29, Dr. Uri Davis spoke at a number of engagements in Ontario and Quebec. Dr. Davis is a distinguished academic and defender of human rights who has written and edited 15 books as well as numerous articles in the field of politics, legal systems and human rights in Israel and Palestine. He is a Jewish citizen of Israel, but prefers to describe himself as a Palestinian Jew.

In his talk, *Apartheid Israel and the Jewish National Fund: The story of Immvas, Yalu, Beit Nuba and Canada Park*, Dr. Davis examined how the Jewish National Fund shares a responsibility in funding illegal settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and what impact Canada's policy has in the region.

NCCAR organized meetings for him with Foreign Affairs Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, IDRC, CIDA as well as the Middle East Discussion Group. In addition, Dr. Davis gave numerous lectures and attended functions in Windsor, London, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and Montreal.

The tour was organized in association with Ed Corrigan, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights–Southern Ontario Regional Committee, Kingston for Palestinian Human Rights, Near East Cultural Educational Foundation, Palestine House/Toronto and London Canadian Palestinian Association.



Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek—From October 6-24, Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek spoke at a number of engagements in Canada. Dr. Ateek is the director of the Sabeel Theology Center in Jerusalem. He is the author of *Justice and Only Justice* (Orbis, 1989) and a leading Palestinian Christian theologian. He lives and serves in Palestine/Israel.

Rev. Ateek visited Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Halifax and Montreal.

NCCAR organized meetings for him with Foreign Affairs Canada, PCO, CIDA, IDRC, Francine Lalonde (Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic), Bernard Patry (Liberal-Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee), Alexa McDonough (NDP Foreign Affairs Critic), and Middle East Discussion Group.

The tour was organized by Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS) and co-sponsored by the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations (NCCAR) and the Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives (KAIROS).



Michael Tarazi—From October 20-27, Michael Tarazi spoke at a number of engagements in Canada. He is a legal and communications advisor with the Negotiations Support unit of the Negotiation Affairs Department for the Palestine Liberation Organization. He was on the legal team that successfully argued against the separation wall being built by Israel at the International Court of Justice. He has been described by the *Wall Street Journal* as “the most articulate and sophisticated Palestinian advocate to come along in years.”

He visited Montreal, Ottawa, London, Hamilton, and Toronto. Lectures in these cities were organized by Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR).

While in Ottawa, NCCAR organized meeting with Foreign Affairs Canada, CIDA, IDRC, Francine Lalonde (Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic), Bernard Patry (Liberal-Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee), Alexa McDonough (NDP Foreign Affairs Critic), and Stockwell Day (Conservative Foreign Affairs Critic).

Mr. Tarazi raised concerns over Canada’s abstention from the ICJ ruling on the separation wall and said that this sent the wrong message to those who believe in a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The PLO advisor also told Foreign Affairs that Canada, as a signatory to the 4th Geneva Convention, cannot stand by idly while Israel contravenes numerous UN resolutions. He pressed Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Bernard Patry on his participation in the Liberal Parliamentarians for Israel document and suggested his name be withdrawn. He also raised concerns about settler products being allowed into the country due to a loophole in the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. Mr. Tarazi was interviewed by CBC Radio, *The Hill Times* and *Embassy Magazine*.

F) Community Development

NCCAR's community development program is an important component of our educational programs. This year we hosted meetings in Montreal in January and June to provide community members with information on the Canadian political system. The event was organized by Sowers of Hope. Mazen Chouaib spoke with about 40 people to provide an overview of party stances on Mid-East policy, how Foreign Affairs Canada works, and what Canadians can do to influence politicians. This outreach program is one that we are working on building through a project with the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF).

In 2005, NCCAR and CAF will be working together to present a series of activities across Canada that focus on promoting the active participation of Arab-Canadians in civil society.

G) Volunteers

Every year, NCCAR works with a number of volunteers who donate their time and energy in support of our mission. This year we received a large number of volunteers who worked in administrative support, policy research, coordinating conferences, and organizing meetings with government officials and parliamentarians. We are most grateful for their efforts and dedication. Our volunteer program also serves to educate the volunteers about NCCAR's activities and raise awareness about Canadian foreign policy and media issues.

Thank you to Essam Farag, Hana Salama, Kristina Roic, Mohamad Albahrani, Casey Wood, Rym Tina Ghazal and Nadir Ahmed.

4.0 Media Bureau

NCCAR efforts at becoming a clearing house of information is recognized by the increased reliance of Canadian and international media on our Bureau. Over the year, we have been pro-active in promoting NCCAR's point of view through publishing opinion pieces, organizing interviews for experts, responding to media calls, and publishing news releases. The following is but a small list of the work of the Media Bureau:

4.1 Published works

- ❖ March 29, 2004, Globe and Mail - *It's hard to find a balance in all the Mideast spin*, By Mazen Chouaib

- ❖ September 22, 2004
The Globe and Mail - *CanWest: Don't vilify Muslims*, By Mazen Chouaib

4.2 Media Interviews

Mazen Chouaib was also widely quoted on numerous issues such as the death of Yasser Arafat, a shift in Canada's foreign policy with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the resumption of ties with Libya, the war and occupation in Iraq, apparent bias in CanWest publications when reporting on Arab issues, among other issues. His comments and analysis appeared in the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, Ottawa Citizen, Hill Times, Embassy, Le Droit, and Calgary Herald, among others.

NCCAR's president and board members were also very much present in local and national media whether through letters to the editor or interviews in newspapers, radio or television. Some of the national media outlets included CBC, Radio-Canada, RCI, CTV, and CPAC. The cities covered included Saskatoon, Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Windsor.

Arab-Canadian media, such as Al Mashriq, Arab News of Calgary, and Bilad of London, have covered NCCAR events such as the Foreign Policy Conference held both in Calgary and Ottawa.

International media outlets such as Al Ahram and Al Jazeera have also quoted NCCAR spokespeople.

We are working to expand our presence in French-language media and will strive to expand our network of spokespeople to ensure that more local media throughout Canada become aware of issues important to NCCAR.

NCCAR also facilitates meetings with the media for experts and representatives of other organizations. We are regularly asked to identify experts, community members, and Arabs in the region for national and international media. NCCAR also works with Canadian reporters working in the Arab region to identify regional experts.

4.3 News Releases

The following is a sample of some of the 27 communiqués that NCCAR issued this year to raise awareness about foreign policy and media coverage issues:

December 17, 2004

NCCAR Welcomes PM's visit to Libya

November 19, 2004

Academics Concerned about Canada's Shift Away from International Law in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict/ Des académiciens qualifient comme troublant le virage politique sur la question israélo-palestinienne

November 17, 2004

NCCAR Welcomes PM's Promise to Help with Palestinian Elections

November 11, 2004

NCCAR Extends its Sympathies to Palestinians, Calls on Canada to Take Leading Role in Pending Elections/Le CNRCA offre ses sympathies aux palestiniens, demande que le Canada prenne un rôle actif pour assurer des élections justes

November 1, 2004

Muslims, Arabs call on B'nai Brith to Repudiate "Terror" Comments

October 25, 2004

NCCAR Rejects Canadian Islamic Congress President's Remarks

October 8, 2004

NCCAR condemns bombings in Egypt

October 7, 2004

NCCAR Calls for Immediate End to Israel's Offensive in Gaza

October 5, 2004

NCCAR urges Minister Pettigrew to increase support for UNRWA Amidst Humanitarian Crisis

October 1, 2004

NCCAR Condemns Israel's Large-scale "Days of Reckoning" Incursion and Offensive in the Gaza Strip

September 17, 2004

NCCAR and CAF Call on Ontario Press Council to Investigate Biased Reporting Against Muslims and Arabs

September 2, 2004

NCCAR troubled by the Israeli government's Gaza closure and curbing of UNRWA Commissioner-General's movement

August 25, 2004

NCCAR commends Foreign Minister Pettigrew for voicing his concern over continuing settlement growth in the West Bank

July 15, 2004

NCCAR Cautiously Welcomes Long-Awaited CRTC Decision

July 14, 2004

NCCAR Demands Immediate Action from Sudan Government

4.4 E-ArabiCa Bi-weekly Newsletter

NCCAR activities and events are publicized in a bi-weekly newsletter that is distributed by email to members, government officials as well as other parties interested in our work. The Council's meetings with parliamentarians, Foreign Affairs officials, NGOs and members of the Arab-Canadian community are included. In addition, E-ArabiCa informs our readers of House of Commons debates, FAC programs, policy issues, media monitoring as well as cultural and educational activities.

4.5 ArabiCa Quarterly Newsletter

ArabiCa is the tool NCCAR uses to promote our activities amongst our membership and with government officials. It is a well-designed glossy paper document published three times a year. It includes NCCAR's main activities and serves to announce upcoming activities. We publish and distribute over 1500 copies on a quarterly basis to government, parliamentarians, NGOs, members and other interested groups and individuals.

5.0 Government Relations

5.1 Delegation to Saudi Arabia and UAE

Every year NCCAR visits Arab countries to consult and encourage engagement with Canada. Mazen Chouaib and Ian Watson travelled to Saudi Arabia (Riyadh and Jeddah) and the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi) for seven days. The trip began in Riyadh where they met with the speaker of the Shura Council (appointed parliament) and members of the Saudi Canada Friendship Group at the Shura. They also met with the minister of Trade and Commerce as well as the Saudi Council of Chambers of Commerce and Trade to discuss opportunities to promote increased trade between the two countries.

In Jeddah Mr. Chouaib and Mr. Watson met with the head of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce. The visit also included a meeting and discussion with the women's-only Effat College, where the faculty is made up largely of Canadian instructors and administrators. They also had the opportunity to meet with the chief editor of Arab News, the leading English-language publication in the Arab region.

In the UAE, they met with the deputy minister of Communication, the president of the Chambers of Commerce, and the president of the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research.

5.2 Prime Minister of Canada

On May 5, 2004, NCCAR and CAF held a meeting with Prime Minister Paul Martin in Ottawa to discuss our concerns about the following issues:

- ❖ Canada's relations with the Arab world
- ❖ Pressure to change Canadian policy in the Middle East
- ❖ Bill C36 and its impact on the Arab-Canadian community

On July 17, 2004, NCCAR organized a meeting between members of the Arab-Canadian community in the West and the Prime Minister during the annual Stampede in Calgary. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan. The issues that were discussed revolved around the following points:

- ❖ Views of the community on the election
- ❖ Canada's policy in the Middle East
- ❖ Relations with Arab countries
- ❖ Greater participation by Arab-Canadians
- ❖ Bill C36 and its impact on the community
- ❖ Canadian foreign policy

5.3 Minister of Foreign Affairs

In 2004, the Council held regular meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (both The Honourable Bill Graham and Pierre Pettigrew) to discuss the issues of Canadian policy in the Arab region, the Israeli-Palestinian question, trade with the region, and the apparent shift in Canadian policy in favour of Israel at the expense of international law.

5.4 Opposition Leader

NCCAR met with Mr. Stephen Harper, the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to establish a relationship and discuss some of the concerns that NCCAR has over the foreign policy positions of the Conservative Party.

5.5 Foreign Affairs Canada

NCCAR meets regularly with officials at Foreign Affairs Canada to advocate the views expressed in our policy papers. As well, we facilitate meetings with members of the community, experts, and organizations concerned about issues of foreign policy towards the Arab world.

5.6 Meetings with Experts

On October 2, NCCAR organized important meetings in Ottawa between Dr. Khalil Shikaki—a prominent Palestinian political expert and director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah—and members of Parliament. Bloc Québécois critic Francine Lalonde as well as Liberal MP and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Bernard Patry met with Dr. Shikaki to discuss the Israeli Gaza withdrawal plan, future elections in the Occupied Territories and the role Canada can play in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Dr. Shikaki also met with a dozen desk officers and directors from the Middle East North Africa Division at Foreign Affairs Canada as well as CIDA and IDRC.

Dr. Shikaki spoke of the importance of Canada becoming involved in the electoral process in the Occupied Territories. He said the nation's expertise on the topic would be much appreciated. But he stressed that Canada should demand that Israel lift the state of siege to facilitate registration and polling activities, to ensure a free and fair election.

Dr. Shikaki was interviewed on CPAC's Talk Politics to discuss the Gaza withdrawal plan as well as President Yasser Arafat's succession.

6.0 Policy Development

6.1 Policy Recommendations

This year, NCCAR produced two policy recommendations presented to the Government of Canada that can be viewed at www.nccar.ca.

- ❖ March 9, 2004: Palestine Israel Conflict: Recommendations to the Government of Canada
- ❖ November 25, 2004: CANADA AND THE ARAB WORLD: Recommendations to the Government of Canada

6.2 Iraq Conference

Along with our partner, the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC), NCCAR organized the first Canadian conference dealing with a potential Canadian role in Iraq.

The conference covered a number of themes that dealt with the needs of an emerging post-war state. Experts were dispatched from Iraq, the United States, Europe and Canada. The conference was funded by the Human Security Division at Foreign Affairs Canada.

The findings of the two-day Iraq conference can be found on our website at <http://www.nccar.ca/publications/documents.html>.

6.3 Foreign Policy Conference

November 13 (Calgary) and November 20 (Ottawa)

Canada's relationship with the Arab world had never been publicly questioned in the past. NCCAR chose to open up this debate with thoughtfulness and courage. We wanted to break down some taboos and sideline the barriers in favour of a public discourse that challenges Canadians and Canada, as well as the Arab community in thinking of new ways to deal with the region. Therefore, NCCAR planned this two-part conference to engage Canadians in an honest, reflective, and forward-looking discussion.

NCCAR decided to take on a much-needed review of Canada's relationship with the Arab region. Experts and practitioners came together in two separate sessions to discuss and debate issues of great relevance to both Canada and the region.

Given the nature of Canadian foreign policy and the important role civil society plays in shaping priorities, a serious study of the role of the Arab community was undertaken. Reports on the conference can be viewed by visiting www.nccar.ca.

7.0 Partnerships/Coalitions

7.1 Margaret Hassan Memorial-Ottawa



NCCAR was present at a November memorial service for Margaret Hassan, a CARE International aid worker who dedicated her life to helping build Iraq and re-build it following US-led attacks. The service was held by Care Canada, in Ottawa at the Monument to Aid Workers. NCCAR expresses its deepest sympathies to the family of Mrs. Hassan as well as to her co-workers.

7.2 Middle East Working Group

MEWG is a coalition of Canadian non-governmental organizations, labour unions and churches. Some members include Care Canada, World Vision, ACCC, Kairos and the Mennonite Central Committee. This year, the group met twice to discuss Canada's role in the Middle East. The second meeting was held with the minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss Canada's shifting policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to express their concerns over the impact of Canada's position in the world.

8.0 Cultural Events

8.1 Yemen: Travels in Dictionary Land by Tim Mackintosh-Smith

On February 1st and 7th, an event focusing on the rich cultural heritage of Yemen took place in Ottawa and Calgary. On the occasion of the nomination of Sana'a as the Capital for Arab Culture 2004, NCCAR teamed up with the Embassy of Yemen to host a two-city tour featuring Mr. Tim Mackintosh-Smith. He discussed his book *Yemen: Travels in Dictionary Land* and showed the video *The English Sheikh and the Yemeni Gentleman*.

8.2 Art Exhibit by Saudi Artist



On November 16 and 17, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations presented an art exhibit by Saudi Artist Mrs. Etadal Etaiwi. The event took place at Ottawa City Hall and the Chateau Laurier. The event was covered by the Ottawa Citizen and Embassy Newspaper.

9.0 Arab Embassies and Visiting Dignitaries

9.1 Libyan Ambassador to UN Visits Canada

NCCAR organized meetings for Libyan Ambassador to the United Nations Mrs. Najat al-Hajaji, the former Chairwoman of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, during the week of February 2, 2004. Ambassador al-Hajaji met with members of the media, government officials and the NGO community. She discussed prospects for closer Libya-Canada relations and recent political developments in Libya with an emphasis on human rights. The tour took Her Excellency to Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto and resulted in the establishment of a number of ties and a better understanding of current developments in Libya.

9.2 Farewell Dinner in Honour of Libyan and Sudanese Chargé d’Affaires

On June 22, NCCAR hosted a farewell dinner in honour of H.E. Ambassador Ali S. Aujali, Libyan Chargé d’Affaires and H.E. Abdulghani A. Al-Karim, Sudanese Chargé d’Affaires. The event was held at the prestigious Rideau Club in Ottawa. The event was hosted by NCCAR, the General Union of Egyptians Abroad and the Arab Canadian Cultural & Media Centre.

10.0 Annual Dinner



NCCAR’s Annual Dinner on December 8 was a success with approximately 200 people attending. Amongst those present were Arab, African and European ambassadors, senators, MPs, Foreign Affairs officials, business people, members, supporters and volunteers. The event was held at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in the beautiful Panorama Room. This year’s keynote address was given by Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan. In her speech, Ms. McLellan spoke of the importance of balancing civil liberties with security concerns.

NCCAR awarded a certificate of appreciation to Senator Mobina Jaffer, QC, for her work with Palestinian and Israeli women, the roundtables for Iraqi and Afghani women, and most importantly, her role as Canada’s Envoy to the IGAD Peace Process in the Sudan.

The first corporate award was given to Talisman Energy for the company’s decision to maintain a development program in Sudan after the company’s decision to sell its assets.

11.0 Twentieth Anniversary Events

The year 2005 marks 20 years since Mr. Ian Watson and members of the Arab community founded the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations. To celebrate this momentous event and the numerous accomplishments achieved over the years, NCCAR is planning a number of special events, combined with our regular activities. We look forward to your participation in these events.

Date	Activity	City	Comments
January 29	Dinner with James Zoghby President of the Arab American Institute	Montreal- St George Antiochian Church	<u>Confirmed</u>
February 25 to March 5	Parliamentary Delegation	Lebanon, Palestine	<u>Confirmed-</u> Details in progress
March 12	Dinner with Adrienne Clarkson Governor General of Canada	Montreal	<u>Confirmed</u>
March 31	Dinner with Dalton McGuinty Premier of Ontario	Toronto	<u>Confirmed</u>
April	Dinner with Ralph Klein Premier of Alberta	Calgary	TBC
May	Dinner with Hanan Ashrawi Secretary General of Miftah	Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto	TBC
June 3-4	Foreign Policy Conference	Ottawa	TBC/Pending Funding
September	Annual Dinner	Ottawa	TBC