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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 3, 2003

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 3, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (0955)

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ) Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to bring to your attention a situation which arose yesterday in the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources during a debate in connection with a time allocation motion presented by a Liberal member of the committee.

While we were debating that motion, and while my colleague from Winnipeg Centre had the floor, a member of the Liberal Party, namely the member for Miramichi, raised a point of order with the chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources and moved the previous question, which is not allowed by the Standing Orders. To quote page 786 of the *House and Commons Procedure and Practice*:

The moving of the previous question is prohibited in a Committee of the Whole as it is in any committee.

Further on the same page it states:

—the moving of the previous question would prevent Members from proposing amendments and considering the legislation to the fullest extent possible.

In this case, the motion in question was a time allocation motion, and my colleague from Winnipeg Centre had the floor.

The committee chair ignored this procedure, this Standing Order, and allowed the previous question to be moved. We challenged this decision by the chair. It is immediately obvious that the chair was, and still is, in complete contradiction with the Standing Orders of the House, and those applying to committees.

It is true, as you stated yesterday, that the committees are masters of their own proceedings and procedures, but still those procedures must comply with the Standing Orders of this House and those applicable to the proper conduct of committee business.

In this case, the committee—and in particular its chair, by his actions—has demonstrated that it needs to be brought back in order. It has very clearly gone beyond the Standing Orders and, as the

preceding citation demonstrates, is preventing the members from doing their job properly and effectively.

I would, moreover, like to submit to you another situation that occurred in this same committee during the first part of its deliberations yesterday. The chair used disgraceful language, unworthy of his office, unworthy of the institution we respect, and unworthy of any member worthy of that name. He used foul language, calling me “chien sale” and “enfant de chienne”. He repeated these terms several times.

I appeal to you today, given these two situations which do no honour to the institution or to the chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources. Since the chair of my committee was not able to act as the guardian of my rights and privileges, therefore, according to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 261, you are:

—the guardian of the rights and privileges of Members and of the House as an institution.

Moreover, on the previous page of that book, we see that:

The duties of the Speaker of the House of Commons require balancing the rights and interests of the majority and minority in the House to ensure that the public business is efficiently transacted and that the interests of all parts of the House are advocated and protected against the use of arbitrary authority.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to intervene, because the chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources contravenes the Standing Orders by his cavalier management of debates, and cause the chair to reverse his decision to allow the moving of the previous question.

I also ask you to intervene to have him stop using disgraceful, unparliamentary language that is particularly unworthy of a committee chair, because we cannot continue in this way; we cannot work effectively to defend the interests of the people we represent in this kind of working environment.

• (1010)

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a couple of details to the intervention made by the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Point of Order

He is accurate and what he says is correct. Last night at the standing committee on aboriginal affairs, I had the floor and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs intervened to ask that the vote be now put. The only difference in what I would like to share with you is that the chair ruled that out of order. The chair said that the question could not be put in standing committees. However he then said that if we did not like that ruling, we could challenge the chair.

At that time, the government side members of the committee challenged the chair and the chair stepped out. An alternate was put in, the vote was taken and the wishes of the parliamentary secretary were in fact passed.

The point I would like you to consider, Mr. Speaker, is the chair did not really have the right to be subject to a challenge because he was only upholding the standing rules. He was not making a ruling or an interpretation. He was merely stating what the standing rules were, subject to Standing Order 116, which is the rules of the House of Commons apply in the absence of anything to the contrary.

It was out of order to even have a vote on challenging the chair or to uphold the ruling of the chair. What I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, very simply is to intervene, through a review of what took place at last night's meeting, and to uphold the ruling of the chair when he ruled the parliamentary secretary out of order. That would mean that I had the floor when this intervention took place, that I should still have the floor to carry on speaking on the motion, which was properly before the committee, and that all subsequent business that took place after this intervention would be rendered null and void because it was not an order.

I would ask you to rule then that we revert back to the period of time prior to the intervention of the parliamentary secretary and again to uphold the ruling of the chair that the parliamentary secretary was out of order to call the question and cease debate on the motion. One cannot call the question at a standing committee, as cited by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond briefly to what has been said because I feel there are a couple of issues that the Chair should consider. I want to eventually draw the attention of the Chair to pages 646 and 647 of Marleau and Montpetit which hopefully will assist the Chair in this matter. I want to preface my remarks to talk about the amount of time that was concentrated for the debate by one member, continuously.

I understand that on Thursday of last week there were some two hours of debate. The day before yesterday there was 13 hours of debate. Last night there was an additional 11 hours of debate by one person.

Mr. Pat Martin: That is not accurate.

Hon. Don Boudria: The hon. member might think that the person had a lot to say, and that is a legitimate concern. I wonder whether Canadians would accept that somebody speaking for something like 25 hours non-stop on one clause meets the test of what is reasonable. The chair of the committee and other members of the committee had their patience and everything else drawn to wit's end after that kind of activity took place. We are sent here to legislate.

I refer members to our procedural manual, Marleau and Montpetit. There is an incident described at page 647, footnote No. 282. It states:

On March 19, 1990, when the Standing Committee on Finance was considering Bill C-62, An Act to implement the goods and services tax, a motion was made to establish a timetable for completing the examination of the bill which resulted in a debate that went on for 31 hours.

One person spoke for 31 hours. Does that sound familiar? That is roughly the same amount of time of the debate that went on over the last three days.

What did the Chair do? I cite:

The Chair then decided to terminate the debate and imposed a form of closure. His action was based on a case which occurred in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in 1984, where the Chair had made an identical ruling in similar circumstances...

I refer your honour to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of June 6, 1984. The House will find this reference in Issue No. 36, pages 3 to 7. We are now up to two such precedents for terminating debate. Interestingly enough in one case after 31 hours.

It goes on further to say:

The Chair's right to make such a ruling was challenged and appealed, but the ruling was upheld by a majority of the Committee.

Does that sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? That is identical to what occurred yesterday.

I continue reading:

—when the action of the Chair was challenged in the House, the Speaker ruled that this was a matter within the competence of the Finance Committee, and stated that it was not the role of the Speaker to supervise committee chairmen...

We are now back to where we are this morning.

I draw this to the attention of the Speaker and ask him to review *Hansard* of March 26, 1990.

•(1015)

When the decision was made yesterday, I understand that the reference which I just read to your honour was also read in committee, so everyone understood under which rule they were operating and where the precedents came for the decisions to be made.

I want to touch briefly on the issue of the previous question to which has been referred. We have a term in the House when we say that the question be now put. That of course does not put the question immediately. The purpose of that in the House is a parliamentary term to refer to the fact that the amendment cease to occur and that we are debating the proposition that is before the House until it expires. That is a different story, I submit to Mr. Speaker, than someone moving in committee that we stop the debate and we vote now.

Point of Order

Maybe the language has some similarity. However, the meaning of it in the committee context is totally different. The meaning when brought to committee to say that this is enough, we now vote, is in fact invoking what is on page 647 of Marleau and Montpetit and elsewhere in our Standing Orders. In other words, people are invoking that we cease the filibuster and proceed with the work of the committee which is why we are sent here.

I will argue with the Chair that is exactly what happened last night, that is exactly what happened in 1990 and that is exactly what happened in 1984. We have three precedents of this.

I do not think anyone can say that the Chair was arbitrary, that he cut off someone after making a 20 minute speech, or a half hour speech or such a short period of time that his constituents or those who he was defending were not heard. How many people do we know who pretend to not have been heard after 31 hours? I challenge anyone to say that if people cannot make their point in 31 hours, could it be that there was no point to be made, or that it had been made several times, repeated and in fact became redundant.

Outside of this, if members became impatient with one another after 31 hours, I am sure everyone regrets that. If people became impatient with one another, that is unfortunate. It says something else. It says that people were at least patient enough to hear all these points before the debate ended and that part of it needs to be heard as well, 31 hours worth.

We have the modernization committee to modernize our rules of the House to make things progress more rapidly. It was sitting earlier this morning.

The hon. member across says that the modernization of Parliament is a waste of time. He may think that. His House leader does not. He has a better point on all this.

• (1020)

The Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the government House leader that we are not on debate. We are on a point of order. Perhaps he could stick to the procedural matters rather than engage in debate, lively and enthusiastic as hon. members are for such discussions.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I will end my point with modernization is not a waste of time. I disagree with the comment made.

The point I make to the Chair is this. In 2003 after 31 hours in committee, after the two precedents I have cited, after the patience of everyone hearing an hon. member, I do believe the conclusion was appropriate in time.

When we are discussing the procedural angle, I hear someone say to use the precedent of the debate on GST. That is not the point. Whether the debate was on capital punishment at the time, or on abortion or on taxes is immaterial to what the Speaker will judge upon this morning. It is whether the procedures were used properly, whether the precedent was set, whether the precedent was accepted by the Chair, whether what occurred last night was similar, which I conclude it is, with those precedents of before making it valid, whether the committee behaved appropriately and whether the decisions of the committee were valid. I believe they are.

I want to congratulate all members of the committee, even those with whom I profoundly disagree, for their patience over that length of time. I wish the hon. members well in concluding their excellent work on the bill, so that we can continue to legislate on behalf of Canadians.

• (1025)

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was in attendance at the meeting last night, and was there for some days before, and in spite of the vigorous bluster of the House leader of the government, I think he is clouding the issue.

Certainly in the reference given to you from Marleau and Montpetit, Mr. Speaker, it suggests that the Speaker can and should rule on these matters of committee only in extraordinary circumstances. I would suggest that from what I heard and saw in committee last night the circumstances certainly have become extraordinary. Mr. Speaker, I would urge you to consider that.

The issue is not whether it was a legitimate move to cut off debate after 31 hours. The issue of using closure in committee is a big issue and sets a big precedent in this place. We have operated for some 130 years without closure in committee and I would hesitate to support starting to do that now.

However, that is not the issue. The issue is that a member of the Liberal side of the committee moved a motion to put the question and the chairman of the committee at the time ruled that the motion was out of order because the member for the NDP had the floor. The chairman ruled correctly. That motion was out of order at the time. Then the committee itself challenged the chair and voted down the ruling of the chair. That is the part I would like a ruling on. Was the ruling of the chair correct or incorrect? If the ruling of the chair was correct, then the members of the committee were incorrect in challenging him, voting him down and forcing us to debate what essentially was an illegal motion.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be fairly brief but I have to make some comments after the government House leader made comments about long speeches. He forgets about the GST debate in the House. It is amazing how one changes one's mind when in opposition versus being in the government.

There were many irregularities at that committee. For example, a government member, on a point of order, moved the previous question. Marleau and Montpetit at page 456 states:

The previous question cannot be proposed by... a Member who has been recognized on a point of order.

On page 456 it is also stated that:

The previous question cannot be moved... in any committee of the House.

The rules of the House were breached, Mr. Speaker, two times on one item. Further, the chair pointed out that such a motion could not be moved. This is where I disagree with my hon. colleague. He talked about the chair being in favour of what was going on. The chair moved that the motion could not be moved. The committee overturned his decision. The ruling was not an interpretation of the rules. It was enforcing the rules.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, in my opinion, the committee went beyond its power, to overrule the chair, whereas if we listened to the government House leader we would think the chair was on the same side as the other people.

The procedural tactic of asking for a ruling and then overruling the chair is dangerous and risky. For example, what would stop a member from asking the chair to rule whether or not the committee could skip the clause by clause consideration of a bill and have it deemed adopted and reported back to the House? The chair would of course rule that such a procedure could not be followed without a motion. The member could move to overrule the decision and the motion could carry. Instantly the government would get the bill adopted without debate because a motion to overrule the chairman is not debatable.

Mr. Speaker, you must review the transcripts of that committee, because the abuses are such that it requires your intervention. I am aware that the Speaker would not normally rule on a committee's proceedings; however, in extraordinary situations the Speaker has a duty to get involved.

The other matter at the committee was that insults and verbal abuses were exchanged and the chairman had much difficulty maintaining order. I understand that not only was there the language quoted by the Bloc member, which is accurate, but also a very personal threat was made against a member of that committee. It is a total abuse of the privileges of the House when a chairman makes a personal threat to somebody in a meeting of a committee.

Mr. Speaker, I think this deserves your attention. It is not something we should treat lightly. It is a committee that has gone amok. It is an example of this government, which has problems with its leadership, but we should not have to put up with that as members of the House. The way the government is running the committee needs your personal intervention and rulings so that this never happens again. Certainly there should be apologies to the member of the House who had the personal insults and threats made to him in committee.

• (1030)

The Speaker: I think the Chair has heard enough on this point. I am concerned that the matter appears to be spinning into a debate about what happened in committee. The Chair has some concern, because it seems to me I heard a point of order on this matter yesterday from the hon. member for Vancouver East. My recollection of her comments was that this committee was sitting in camera. Part of her complaint was that the proceedings of the committee being in camera and the debate taking place in the committee that involved whether or not there would be some limitation on time of members was part of the discussion in the committee.

If these committee proceedings are in fact in camera it will be difficult for the Chair to see what happened by examining the committee records. I have heard a fair bit here on the floor of the House this morning, which considering the matter was in camera strikes me as odd, but I am concerned that the whole issue seems to be spilling into something outside of the committee that was in fact sitting in camera. At least I sense that it was; I have not heard anyone

tell me that it was not, except that I heard the member for Vancouver East tell me it was yesterday. I am somewhat concerned about it.

I also feel that I have heard enough from hon. members at this point. I am going to take the matter under advisement and find out what I can, given the circumstances that I have indicated to the House. If I need to hear further from hon. members, I will come back to the House and indicate I am prepared to hear further argument on the issue before I make a decision. In the circumstances, I think it is time we moved on to other business.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot had an opportunity to make a presentation on this matter. I think we should end the discussion at this point. The Chair can review the facts alleged by the members in the House and see what it can find out concerning the committee and the process.

I will come back to the House with a decision, but if further input is needed in this regard, I will get it soon.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 30 petitions.

* * *

TERRORISM

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise the House that the government has listed seven more entities pursuant to the Criminal Code and under the Anti-terrorism Act.

The newly listed entities are as follows: Jemaah Islamiah; Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan; Basque Homeland and Liberty; Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia; and National Liberation Army.

This listing is a public confirmation that these entities are engaged in terrorist activity. The consequences are severe, not only for terrorists but for those who support them. It is now a crime to knowingly participate in, contribute to, or facilitate the activities of these entities. Any person or group that is listed may have its assets seized and forfeited. Those who deal with the property or finances of these entities are subject to severe penalties, including up to 10 years' imprisonment.

As I have said before, the list is a work in progress. I can assure the House that the assessment process for other possible listings of those who support terrorism continues.

Today's listing brings to 26 the total designated since last July under Canada's Anti-terrorism Act, and, under Canada's United Nations suppression of terrorism regulations, Canada has listed and frozen the assets of more than 370 entities.

Routine Proceedings

Whether through our domestic listing mechanisms, the signing and ratification of international agreements, or the presence of our troops in Afghanistan, we have offered our unwavering support in the war against terrorism, and we will continue to be a full partner in the international effort to deny terrorists sanctuary and a base of operations.

My message to the House, and to all Canadians, continues to be that we cannot consider ourselves immune and we cannot afford to drop our guard.

We will continue to work closely with our neighbours and with government departments and agencies at all levels to ensure that we are as safe as we can possibly be. We are committed to taking the steps needed to protect our citizens. Public safety is, and continues to be, our absolute priority.

• (1035)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition, I welcome this opportunity to respond to the Solicitor General's statements regarding the listing of a further seven entities pursuant to the Criminal Code.

In late November, the Solicitor General stood in the House to announce the addition of six entities to the list initiated on July 23, a list that contained a meagre seven terrorist organizations. On December 11, the Solicitor General rose again to announce that Hezbollah was finally being added to the list but only after enduring weeks of relentless pressure from the official opposition. Again, on February 12, the Solicitor General listed a further three. At this time we criticized the Solicitor General for his failure to recognize and list Jemaah Islamiyah and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

I am therefore pleased today to learn that almost two months after the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition, requested these dangerous and known terrorist organizations to be added to the list, the Solicitor General has finally listened.

Why is it taking so long for the government to recognize the obvious? Why is it taking so long to list these entities that have been recognized and listed by the United Nations and the United States? We have condemned and will continue to condemn the government for the inordinate amount of time it is taking to compile the list of known terrorist entities, which includes as of today only 26 while the United Nations has identified some 200.

The Solicitor General has just said, and I quote, that "...we cannot afford to drop our guard...We are committed to taking the steps needed to protect our citizens. Public safety is, and continues to be, our absolute priority".

I must point out that I cannot accept this statement given recent revelations that the anti-terror databank is in jeopardy because of the lack of funds. The Canadian Public Safety Information Network, a consolidation of key justice and police data systems, including CPIC, will allow information sharing between federal and provincial law enforcement and justice agencies as well as the exchange of information between Canada and the United States. The terrorist attacks of September 11 highlighted the importance of information sharing between our two countries.

In closing, I urge the Solicitor General to find the money to ensure that the anti-terror databank is not threatened. I would suggest that he abandon the firearm registry and better utilize the money on the war on terrorism. Then and only then will he truly be making public security a priority.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the Solicitor General indicated, seven new entities have been added to the list, bringing the total number to 26.

With respect to these seven new entities, the only problem is that no reasons are given to explain why they are on this list.

The first group, Jemaah Islamiyyah, is on the UN list, as are the second, third and fourth groups mentioned. However, for the fifth group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia, no reason is provided. In 2002, Parliament debated a motion demanding and forcing the Colombian government to negotiate with this guerilla movement and not to take armed action.

This group, obviously, must have an opportunity to make representations in order to negotiate. The House asked the Colombian government to negotiate with this guerilla group.

It is surprising, therefore, that today this group has been added to the list, without any reasons or explanations being provided. This group is, we know, on the American list, but it is strange that the report tabled in May 2000 in Parliament has not been respected or acted upon. I would like to make this distinction and demand an explanation from the Solicitor General.

It is important to remember that we asked that this be amended because, initially, we opposed the creation of such a list. Why? Because, clearly, the Solicitor General has not provided any proof, yet this group has been added to the list. The government is doing the opposite of what Parliament had asked in a motion.

Entities are obviously being added to the list without justification; names will, no doubt, be added to the list without these groups being able to find out why. I wonder why they are on the list. The Solicitor General is making recommendations without explaining his reasons.

The same is true for the National Liberation Army. The House's actions must be respected. We are not saying that such specific recommendations to the list should be contested, but reasons must be given as to why these groups have been added. We must not forget that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia is the group that abducted Ingrid Betancourt. The decision to add such a group to the terrorist list endangers the lives of hostages such as Ingrid Betancourt. I find this quite problematic.

Routine Proceedings

●(1040)

[English]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, looking at this list of seven additional banned groups, the obvious question that jumps out is, why these? Why, for example, the three groups from Colombia and none of the paramilitary groups that have clearly been responsible for the torture and death of numerous labour leaders in that country?

There are more labour leaders killed in that country by those paramilitary groups that are closely attached to that government and to the military. Why are they not on the list? We have no reason to believe that these groups should be on the list because there is a lack of information. There is inherently a fault in the way this system works.

The resources that we have for the intelligent services are not adequate enough to tell us whether any of these groups should be on the list. There are not enough resources to go after all the other groups that might be terrorist groups. We do not have the ability to do that from a financial standpoint. Yet we go ahead and do this.

We are trying to convince the country that somehow this protects us from terrorism. It is a total falsehood. It is simply a situation where the government is building this smokescreen implying that it is trying to do something about terrorism. It is not moving our battle against terrorism whatsoever. When we look at it from a civil liberties standpoint, there is no basis on which we as parliamentarians can stand here and have any comfort that the civil liberties of this country are being protected. It is just the opposite. We must be very concerned that there may be many injustices coming out of this system.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, Canada must send a message to the world that we are not a safe haven for terrorist organizations and there will be ramifications for those who operate outside the law.

Today's listing brings the total to 26 organizations designated as terrorist entities under the Anti-terrorism Act. Canada's United Nations suppression of terrorism regulations have listed and frozen the assets of more than 370 entities. Despite the government's official stand on the war in Iraq, an action which in part will assist with the war on terrorism, today's announcement signals the willingness of Canada to continue the fight against these heinous organizations on the home front. We must do all that we can to ensure terrorism does not get a foothold in North America.

Perhaps today more so than ever before we must be concerned about terrorist organizations and terrorist activity. We hear daily the pledges from Saddam Hussein that he would carry on terrorist acts throughout the world.

The Canadian government must ensure that Canadians are protected from such acts. We support the government in identifying terrorist groups in order to limit the chance of any terrorism activity taking place in our country.

However, we take issue with a couple of items in the statement. The minister said that any person or group that is listed may have its assets seized and forfeited. Why may? If the government has the proof, which perhaps has not been circulated but I am sure it has to

have taken such action, of these groups supporting terrorist activity, then the government should seize the assets.

The minister's message to all Canadians continues to be that we cannot consider ourselves immune and we cannot afford to drop our guard. It is so true. We must work with our friends and neighbours to ensure that does not happen. Perhaps therein lies our weakness. We should always ask the question, how did these groups get into our country in the first place and why did we let people come here to continue on the fight that they started somewhere else?

We must be vigilant as to how we deal with terrorists. The government must start taking a stronger leadership role than we have seen today.

* * *

●(1045)

*[Translation]***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table in the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, and the financial report relating to it.

The report concerns the meeting of the political committee of the APE, which was held in Luxembourg from March 3 to 6, 2003.

* * *

*[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to point out that the hon. member who just tabled a report had an additional statement to make. It is not on the record because her microphone was off and I would like to advise that she should have the opportunity to restate her statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Could the hon. member for St. Paul's repeat her statement?

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, we were hoping that the House would give its consent to move concurrence later this day. I understand the Bloc will not give its consent today and we will do it another day.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, did you ask if we agreed that this report be tabled?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): No. The member for St. Paul's mentioned that since the Bloc Québécois had already indicated that it would not give its consent, she would not present her motion.

Supply

[English]

PETITIONS

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Shuswap, who live in Vernon and Lumby, I am pleased to present a petition requesting that Parliament protect the rights of Canadians to be free to share their religious beliefs without fear of prosecution. The petitioners feel that the current provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada can be effective in preventing true threats against individuals or groups without changes to sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code.

• (1050)

COAST GUARD

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition endorsed by 52 constituents of my riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands. The petitioners call upon Parliament to make the Coast Guard an independent body separate from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with all the necessary resources and staffing.

JUSTICE

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition endorsed by 55 constituents who call upon Parliament to refrain from adding sexual orientation to the Criminal Code of Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 14 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

SITUATION IN IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will advise you that I will be splitting my time.

This is an important motion as our allies and our friends head to victory in the war against Saddam, a war that we believe will change the world and its alliances and relationships fundamentally. The motion will assist Canada in preserving its place in the world, its relationships and its values. I believe there is no reason why any hon. member of the House should find objection to the motion.

The motion is divided into two parts. The second part calls upon the House to support a successful military conclusion of the allied effort. It says that we "hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power", and it urges "the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq".

I would like to give a little bit of a personal backdrop to this. Last night at Stornoway I hosted a reception for ambassadors and representatives of nearly 50 countries that have now joined the coalition. I did that on behalf of our caucus and, I believe, on behalf of the silent majority of Canadians, to tell them, to tell these countries and to tell their people that in this fight we Canadians are not and cannot be neutral any more than we can be for Saddam; that we are with our friends, our allies and our own troops; and that we support them for freedom, for democracy, for the reconstruction of Iraq, and for the liberation of its people.

This is not a question on how this war happened or whether it should have occurred in the first place. It is something very different. It is now how this will play out and how we will stand in it.

We are always surprised by the wisdom of children. I was surprised a few days ago when my six year old son Benjamin asked me in the car, as we were listening to a radio broadcast on the war, "What happens, Dad, if Saddam wins?" He said that very fearfully, because to a six year old the outcome of a war is not obvious as it may be to some of us here.

We do have to cast our thoughts on what would be the consequences if Saddam were to be victorious, and all that he is and all that he aspires to be if that were to be fulfilled. We think we have the luxury of guessing and second-guessing our friends and allies, but if we have guessed wrong it could, as a conclusion of this war, devastate every aspect of our economy, our country and our future. That is why unconditionally supporting an allied victory is unequivocally in the national interest of this country.

The first part of the motion is perhaps the one that will give some people more difficulty. It reads:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of the House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally....

When we cut beneath the surface, in all but a few cases, anti-Americanism probably has clouded this debate and become, at this point, the only real motive that some have for hesitating to support our allies.

Supply

Anti-Americanism has a couple of roots in this country. One of those is history. The revolutionary war with the United States laid the groundwork for this country and the war of 1812 preserved the separation between the British Crown and the American republic.

However that division ended 100 years ago. In the last century, when the great nations of the world fought these tremendous battles, the Americans and the British were united against the evils that threatened our civilization. On this continent, Canada led those fights. We were there first.

I remember even Hollywood, which is sometimes awfully parochial, recognized this a few years ago. I think it was back in the 1980s when I saw a Sylvester Stallone movie where he played an American POW who was involved in liberating various allied POWs in France. This was in the early part of the war, so how was an American POW there? He was there because he had enlisted in the Canadian army when the Americans were still involved in a debate about whether they should or should not participate.

• (1055)

The Americans learned, I think partly from us as well as from other events, the error of isolationism. They learned that they could not sit smugly on the sidelines avoiding difficult moral choices that their friends had to make in a troubled world.

Let us pledge today that when America and Britain in the future make these choices we will never again allow ourselves to be isolated from them.

The other source of anti-Americanism, I believe, is more psychological. The fact is that we are different and our differences sometimes have irritated and, yes, sometimes even frightened others. When we go to the United States, even as English speaking Canadians, as much as many of us love the United States, have friends, acquaintances and even close relations there, we know Americans are different. We know Americans can sometimes be, if I can be honest, loud, boastful, aggressive, maybe overbearing and certainly overwhelming, but we also know they have hearts as big as this planet.

What other great power has ever rebuilt the enemies it has defeated? Even with the trade difficulties we have, what other great and huge country throws open its market in a way similar to what the United States does? What other dominant force has ever so clearly stood for the hopes, the dreams and the common good of ordinary people everywhere?

However if the Americans can occasionally be overbearing and overwhelming, we in this country, if we want to be frank, can sometimes be a little underwhelming.

Let me frank about this, in reference to something my office has prepared. This multiple page document is a litany of anti-American comments emanating from government benches in only the past few weeks and only over this particular conflict. I could add much more outside of that context. This litany of insults and outrageous abuse of our American friends contains quotes that range from the incredibly stupid to the truly vile. That is the only way I can put it. This is not a testament to our independence. It is a testament to a streak of immaturity and irresponsibility that this party does not share and will never embrace.

Let me be clear and let us all be clear on all sides of the House, because I know there are Liberals of goodwill in this, these kinds of quotes do not in any way diminish the United States of America. They diminish only us.

We are lucky to have the Americans as our neighbour, our ally and friend. To have had this relationship for so long makes us greater in the world, not weaker and lesser in the world. I suspect that there was not one nation represented at Stornoway last night, and, frankly, very few nations in the world, that do not envy our proximity to the United States in so many ways. It is not something fundamental for us to guard against. It is our biggest asset in this very dangerous world.

I urge the House to get behind this motion, to get behind our relationships, to get behind our friends, to get behind our allies and, needless to say, to get behind our own troops in this conflict and in the rebuilding that will occur.

God bless America. God save the Queen. The maple leaf forever.

• (1100)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is both a privilege and a pleasure for me to join in the debate today. As always, I am grateful for the opportunity.

At the outset of my remarks I will repeat the motion so it will be clear to everyone who is watching this debate unfold today in the House of Commons. The Leader of the Opposition brought the motion forward today which states:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and; hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

This is the second opportunity I have had to address this very important global issue.

Ever since the commencement of military action of coalition forces in Iraq, Canadians have become increasingly emotional and entrenched in their respective positions in either support or opposition to the war. Around the globe and even right here on Parliament Hill, people have gathered to express their views on this matter. Last Saturday marked the most recent of any such gathering with about 5,000 people showing up on Parliament Hill, not to express their opposition to the war but their support for the coalition effort of Australia, Great Britain and the United States of America. Many of these people expressed their profound disappointment in their government for, first, its wavering position on Iraq and, second, its opposition to removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power.

From the very beginning, the Canadian Alliance has been very clear in enunciating our support for the coalition effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power, something we have not seen from the government. We have taken this position for mainly two reasons: first, it is simply the right thing to do; and second, because we believe in supporting our traditional allies in global conflicts.

There are those who say that the choice we have as a nation is between war and peace. They say that the choice is to stand with those nations that wage war or with those that believe peace can be achieved by endless dialogue with Saddam Hussein, in other words, extending the existing dialogue we have had beyond the 12 years. I say the choice is between right and wrong.

There is only one way to end the rape, torture and rampant executions of the Iraqi people. There is only one way to free the Iraqi people. There is only one way to ensure lasting peace and make basic human rights a part of everyday life in Iraq. The only way is to rid Iraq of Saddam Hussein permanently.

The Kurds, Shiites and Iraqis who have been longing for freedom found out in 1991 what happens to those who dare oppose Saddam. Thousands were tortured and murdered. Saddam is responsible for an estimated one million brutal deaths during his 25 year reign of terror. Let us not forget the 5,000 Kurdish men, women and children who were gassed because they dared to stand up against Saddam. He uses food as a weapon against his own people to punish those who oppose him. Just this week Saddam commanded his army to open fire on their own citizens who were trying to flee the city of Basra.

While the coalition is doing everything possible to prevent deaths of innocent civilians, Saddam Hussein's regime uses women and children as human shields. This is the reality the Iraqi people live through every day.

The world cannot allow another massacre. We should not and cannot remain neutral while thousands more perish at the hands of this tyrant and his brutal regime. We know that in the past he has used chemical weapons and he still threatens to use them at the same time as he denies owning them.

• (1105)

There is a price for peace and Canadians know this. There is a cost for freedom. We need only look back to our efforts at Vimy Ridge in World War I and Dieppe and Ortona in World War II as examples. Our brave Canadian soldiers fought hard during those battles, proudly earning Canada a rightful place in history defending peace and freedom.

Yet today we find ourselves in a situation where millions of Iraqis are in need of help and all diplomatic avenues are exhausted. Our traditional allies, Australia, Great Britain and the United States, have taken the next step by forming a coalition to remove the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein by force. Where is Canada during all of this? Nowhere. Not only is Canada not participating in the coalition effort, we are not even on the sidelines standing with our traditional allies encouraging them with our support for their cause.

Last Friday the United States Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Paul Cellucci, was in my riding of Prince George—Peace River to deliver a speech in my hometown of Fort St. John. After his remarks, he reiterated sentiments on Canada's position on the war that he had raised earlier in the week in Toronto. He said, "Canada is family and nothing is ever going to change that; people do pay attention to what leaders here in Canada say. We thought Canada would be there for its neighbour, particularly when we see this as a direct threat. On almost all of it, Canada is at our side, so it is a little disappointing on the war on Iraq that they are not".

Supply

This quote followed an even clearer statement from the ambassador when he was in Toronto, "There is no threat to Canada that the United States would not be ready, willing and able to help with. There is no debate. There would be no hesitation. We would be there for Canada, part of our family".

Never before have we let down one of our best friends in such a devastating manner. Not only are we not helping our friends, but we are not even giving them the support they need during a difficult time when they need us the most. It boggles the mind. I am sure almost every member of the House and many viewers who are watching at home today can relate to the hurt and betrayal they must be feeling, knowing that their friends were not there to support them when they needed them the most.

In addition to abandoning our friends and neighbours, the Liberal government across the way is adding insult to injury with uncalled for insults and derogatory remarks directed toward the United States and its president. Sadly these are not isolated incidents. They are symptoms of the out of control anti-American sentiment of the Liberal government. The disdain the government has for our American neighbours is thoroughly ingrained in its mentality. On a regular basis we see shocking examples of insults which can only hurt our important international relationship.

The Prime Minister's own press secretary had to submit her resignation after she called the President of the United States of America a moron. We can only hope she was not representing the views of her boss.

Within the Liberal backbenches the member for Mississauga Centre told reporters just outside the chamber, "Damn Americans, I hate those bastards". Thankfully she retracted her statement, stating she did not mean to direct her comments to all Americans, perhaps just a couple of Americans she knows.

Last but not least, a member of cabinet was attacking the president for not being a statesman. The disdain the Liberal government holds for our neighbours to the south is, quite frankly, appalling.

Regardless of these hurtful sentiments, Canadians expect better from a federal government. They expect their government to represent the views of all Canadians, not just their own. If Liberal members truly hate Americans, I ask on behalf of Canadians that they keep those comments to themselves because they are hurting us as a nation.

As I begin to conclude my remarks I ask all members to support the motion before us today. The motion asks the House to do four simple things: one, express and apologize for the offensive remarks made toward our American friends; two, reaffirm our close friendship with the United States; three, wish a successful conclusion to the removal of Saddam Hussein from power; and four, urge the Government of Canada to assist with the reconstruction of Iraq.

I would think that even Liberals should be able to support those goals and this motion today.

Supply

•(1110)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated very much the speeches that were given by my colleague and by my leader earlier.

Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed that I hesitated a bit before I stood up. I wanted to give an opportunity to the Liberals opposite to stand and ask some questions and to express their views. It would be good if they were to engage in the debate instead of just sitting back. One of the most serious indictments in this whole situation is that the Prime Minister has not yet given a major speech on this issue. He is standing on the sidelines and we need leadership in this country.

I remember, and this is one of the disadvantages of being this old, when I was a youngster watching a movie, which was in black and white of course. The name of the movie is *The Mouse That Roared*. It is a classic. I recommend that everyone watch it.

The movie is about a little country that got into a lot of trouble so the people devised a strategy to solve their economic problems. They decided that they would attack the United States because it was known that after the little country lost, and it surely would, the United States would pour millions of dollars into the little country to rebuild and would restore it. That was their strategy.

Unfortunately, and this is what made the movie so funny, at every stage the little country was successful and it brought the Americans to their knees. It was really very funny. It was a comedy, so this is how it worked out. But the premise was that the Americans would help and this is their history.

I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that those who harbour ill feelings against our friends the Americans are totally wrong. Their whole history has been one of stepping into the breach, standing between tyrants and their victims, helping those who are in need.

Mr. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would agree with my hon. colleague from Elk Island. I would suggest that anyone who would do even a cursory examination of the history of the United States of America would have to agree with that.

One of the saddest things of the whole debate that is taking place not only in Canada but around the world right now is the incredible increase in anti-American feeling and comment. Regardless of what reason people attribute to the fact that the Americans are in Iraq right now, the world owes them a huge debt of gratitude. They have young men and women in their armed forces along with British and Australians who are there risking their lives. Sadly, there already has been quite a number and I do not know what the latest count is but I think it is rapidly approaching 100 young men and women who have perished on the coalition side in this conflict.

I cannot imagine being a family member of one of those young soldiers and hearing some of the horrible anti-American comments being made. Those that are coming from Canada, it shames me as a Canadian to have those attributed to our nation, to individuals. Certainly they do not represent the vast majority of Canadians. I would not believe that for a minute.

I did not have time during my remarks to say that I and the members of the Canadian Alliance hold those who harbour the

opposite point of view from our own with a great deal of respect. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right of a democracy. The fact that our country is so divided on this issue speaks volumes for the fact that we are a democratic nation.

Personally, I respect and I would defend the rights of Canadians to feel that it is wrong for the coalition to be involved in the war on Iraq. That does not change my personal views or the views of my party. I would hope that every person who marches for peace, who believes very strongly that the coalition should not be there, would hold similar views; that we also have a right to be heard, that we have the same rights to freedom of speech, that we have the same rights to vigorously express our opinion that we should be standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies, with our friends. I hope that the debate is in that manner, not only today but for however long this war lasts and we all hope and pray it will be short.

•(1115)

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I begin by saying that I believe it is appropriate for parliamentarians once again to have the opportunity to express themselves on the events that we see unfolding daily in Iraq.

These are matters of profound importance that are of great concern to our fellow citizens. The conflict is painful to watch from afar for all of us, but it must be especially so for those who have family members in the region, either as ordinary inhabitants of Iraq or as members of the armed forces involved in conflict.

To those who are thus affected may I say on behalf of the government that our thoughts and our prayers are with you. We all hope for an early end to this conflict with as few casualties as possible.

[Translation]

It is extremely difficult for us to witness this conflict from afar. Imagine what those who have close relatives or members of their family in the region are going through, whether they are Iraqi citizens or members of the armed forces on the battleground.

To each and every one of those who are affected directly or indirectly, on behalf of the Government of Canada, let me reiterate that our thoughts and prayers are with you. We all hope for an early end to this conflict with as few casualties as possible.

[English]

Canada is not directly engaged in this conflict. We stood apart because we believe that it is the Security Council of the United Nations that ought to take the responsibility for authorizing the use of force in international conflict. This is consistent with decades of Canadian foreign policy and it is consistent with the charter of the United Nations. It is consistent with past practice, as long ago as the Korean war and as recently as the first gulf war.

It is for that reason that our diplomats worked in support of UN Security Council resolution 1441 authorizing an intrusive program of weapons inspections with a view to achieving the disarmament of Saddam Hussein's regime to the end of promoting peace in the region.

We share the frustration of the United States, the United Kingdom and others at the inadequate compliance by Iraq with resolution 1441 as evidenced by the testimony of Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector. It was our hope that by authorizing greater time for inspection, a broader consensus could emerge in the international community that the use of force was necessary.

[*Translation*]

Our principles have not changed. They are as strong today as they were when our diplomats were working tirelessly toward bringing a new resolution before the United Nations Security Council.

But events have unfolded very rapidly. There is a war going on as we speak. This is not the first time that, when either Canada or the U.S. is at war, we do not go to war at the same time. It happened between 1914 and 1917, and again between 1939 and 1941. The Vietnam war was another instance.

● (1120)

[*English*]

We have remained steadfast allies, partners in NATO and in Norad, sharing intelligence and co-operating in continental defence.

Let there be no mistake, however, as to the sympathies of Canadians and their government at this time. Our friends are at war. Our friends are putting their lives on the line for their beliefs. We watch the nightly news and we share every moment of grief felt by the families of both civilians and soldiers lost to this conflict. We are also outraged by the images of torture and exploitation of captured coalition soldiers, a direct violation by Iraq of the Geneva conventions.

I want it understood with absolute clarity that Canada stands with its friends, even if we cannot engage with them in this conflict. We mourn the losses of their sons and daughters in war. We pray with them for a swift end to the conflict and, yes, for a swift victory.

Our overarching goal to end terror and injustice so that a freer, more prosperous and more secure world can arise remains. We back that conviction with our soldiers in Afghanistan where hundreds of Canadians have fought with Americans and others to put an end to the Taliban and al-Qaeda since late 2001, where some of our young men have died and where Canada will return with a major troop deployment to play a key role in the international security assistance force this summer.

I also want to recognize with pride the 30 plus Canadian soldiers currently on exchange with the U.K. and U.S. armies, some of whom are known to be deployed in the Iraq theatre right now. We back our conviction with the Canadian ships that continue their mission in creating passages of safety in the Arabian Gulf for all who legitimately pass through there, including U.S. ships. The Canadian navy continues to provide the command and control for the anti-terrorism coalition vessels in that area, as well as undertaking a vital interdiction role, stopping traffickers and smugglers from moving their illicit drugs and other goods out of the region.

We back our conviction with our commitment to humanitarian assistance for the Iraqi people and our intention to play a role together with the United States and others in Iraq's reconstruction when the war is over and Saddam is gone.

Supply

We back our conviction by maintaining a global commitment to development and to human rights, the most important tools of freedom that exist. However we also have to back that conviction by staying united. I can think of nothing to give our enemies greater comfort than watching friends tearing at each other.

I do not want to hear another story about people booing each other's national anthems at sporting events. I do not want to hear about Canadians and Americans cancelling business transactions. I do not want to hear voices of disrespect at any level, and I have said so in Canada many times.

I want us to get serious, Canadians and Americans alike, and remember what we are about, about all that we have achieved in partnership and all that we still need to do together. We have a large global agenda to get on with. We have work to do in so many areas through whatever means our respective countries are best equipped to offer. There are peace and security issues, reconstruction, humanitarian crises, global development, anti-poverty, health agendas.

The Alliance resolution today makes reference to certain statements made outside this chamber by some of its members. May I say that it is regrettable that at a time of conflict disrespect may have been shown for the people, the President or the government of the United States.

Let us remember, however, that members of the House have every right to express their views in a responsible fashion on the policies and actions of this government or of any other government in the world, whether that be Iraq, the United States or another. We live in a democracy in which freedom of speech is one of its most fundamental characteristics. This is surely one of the objectives that coalition forces are fighting to bring about in Iraq.

● (1125)

However it has always been my belief that it was possible to be critical of the policies of another government on the basis of principle without personalizing that criticism while demonstrating respect.

While the war is underway and while young men and women are offering themselves in service of their countries for a cause that they believe in, it is not the time for us to revisit the reasons for the conflict or to offer critical commentary.

There should be no mistaking the sympathy that we have for the ultimate success of the coalition forces. Saddam Hussein should take no comfort for his own brutal regime in the principles that we have espoused at the United Nations. It is time now for Canada and for Canadians to face the future squarely and to begin assuming the responsibility that we have for constructing a better and safer world.

Of course the security of North America must be of primary concern and we must strive to reassure our neighbours on this continent of our full commitment to North American security. I will reiterate this commitment in my meetings in Washington this coming Monday with Secretary Ridge.

*Supply**[Translation]*

We reaffirm our support and commitment to international institutions upon which world peace and security depend.

Canada firmly believes in the essential role the United Nations must play in the aftermath of this conflict as well as in the resolution of any other conflict.

Canada remains steadfastly committed to providing humanitarian assistance now and in the future, and to supporting the reconstruction process in Iraq once the conflict is over.

[English]

We reaffirm equally our commitment to our NATO allies and to the community of nations who have joined with us, the United States and others, in the global war on terrorism. Canadian foreign policy has a proud history of engagements in and support for multilateral institutions. These were in many cases developed in the period following World War II and proved invaluable in maintaining peace and stability, at least among major powers, during the decades of the cold war.

In this post-cold war era our government believes that international consensus and the resulting legitimacy that flows therefrom is perhaps even more important. Why? We were shocked and profoundly affected by the events of September 11, 2001. Canadians were and are wholeheartedly supportive of the war against terrorism.

In a world in which the United States has emerged as the sole superpower, it is inevitable that it must bear a disproportionate burden in world affairs. It is thus in the interests, not only of the global community but of the United States itself, if the U.S. is not to be increasingly the target of the militant and disaffected everywhere, that multilateral institutions remain strong and proactive and that international consensus be the foundation of legitimacy when decisive action must be taken.

If Canada is to be the true friend and ally of the United States that we surely are then we must remain true to these principles. It is not by blindly following but by constructively supporting that we can be of the greatest assistance to the United States.

We can be reminded of the words of one of Canada's greatest diplomats, Nobel Peace Prize winner and prime minister, Lester B. Pearson who said:

One principle of our relationship with the United States is that we should exhibit a sympathetic understanding of the heavy burden of international responsibility borne by the United States—not of our own imperial choosing but caused in part by the unavoidable withdrawal of other states from certain of these responsibilities.

Above all, as American difficulties increase, we should resist the temptation to become smug and superior: "You are bigger but we are better". Our own experience, as we wrestle with our own problems, gives us no grounds for any such convictions.

It is to be reminded that Mr. Pearson was the Prime Minister of Canada during the beginning of the Vietnam war.

My colleague, the leader of the government, will soon table a motion in the House that clearly defines the government's position. That motion will read as follows:

That this House reaffirms:

The substantial sense of the House, voted on March 20, 2003, in support of the government's decision not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq;

The unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States and the United Kingdom;

Our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region;

Our hope that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible, with the fewest casualties; and

The commitment of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

• (1130)

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member's speech, and I guess I am looking for an explanation.

The abuse of our friends in the United States by many of his colleagues over the last while has, and I think many Canadians would agree, been highly irresponsible.

If the Americans were to implement the visa system they have with many of the other countries in the world, which we do not have with regard to crossing its border, it would literally shut down probably a third or half of the Canadian economy. Therefore to tempt those types of things is highly irresponsible.

I also think back to the member's comments that he made with regard to the hypocrisy of going to the bathroom when somebody received the cheque. I think of Canada not standing by our allies and instead going to the bathroom when the cheque comes in this circumstance. What does the member think about Canada's situation now?

I also cannot help but think of the flip-flop when the government and this member said that our troops would stay out, but actually they are in. Even in his speech today he talked about the United Nations and wanting to ensure that we got UN approval. Yet that was not the case in Kosovo or Afghanistan. How can I trust that is actually what he seeks when in the two other situations he did not? There seems to be a contradiction.

I also cannot help but feel there is a sense of denial on behalf of the government when it has troops deployed in Iraq and has in a sense tried to hopefully hide that situation. I cannot help feeling let down over that.

Canada has sat on the sidelines in this whole thing while 50 countries are involved. If memory serves me correctly, I think there were just over 30 countries went in to liberate Kuwait. There is a larger coalition now than there was then but Canada this time is trying to keep itself outside.

There is a profound let down when the government claims that it stands for human rights, yet we have seen it let down the Kurdish population, the Shiites, women in Iraq and so on. Always keep in mind the problems that were in Kuwait with regard to organized rapes and systemic rapes. Will the government apologize for the insults against our allies and our neighbours, the United States?

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, there is a jumble of various things mentioned. As far as I can tell, the one thing that really is of substance and which perhaps bears some response is the question of allied forces, particularly under the authority of NATO, having intervened in Kosovo admittedly without the strength of a UN Security Council Resolution.

If the hon. member takes the time to review my remarks, he will see is that we have viewed the UN Security Council as a very effective vehicle for delivering evidence of an international consensus. It is the broader international consensus that is needed to increase legitimacy of the use of force.

The action in Kosovo was based finally on a NATO decision not to change a regime in that case or even in fact to disarm a regime, but on the burden of the duty to protect Kosovars who were victims, as the world community saw it at that time, of genocide on the part of the Serbian leadership. It did not result in a change of regime. That in fact happened under democratic processes subsequent to the intervention.

Therefore the point I would leave with the hon. member is that the use of force and military action should always be seen as something that is very unusual. It is not to be condoned without broad international consensus. Ideally that should be consistent with the charter of the United Nations expressed by the UN Security Council.

However if there needs to be force used, the broadest possible basis of international consensus is what should be sought. That is in the interest not only of what we might call the victims of the action but also of those who are taking the action, so they can stand on the basis of precedent and international support in taking the action that they choose to take.

• (1135)

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be able to put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister on this topic. In all fairness, we would have to say that some of the rhetoric and condescending language that came from not only cabinet ministers but backbench members of the Liberal Party and staff members of the Prime Minister have taken a toll.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is simply this: Can we move beyond that and how do we do it? Does he see some possibilities, in this difficult period for the United States and the world, to repair some of that damage which we feel has been done?

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have been ambiguous about the fact that I share the regret and the distaste for some of the remarks that have been made. At this point, given that most if not all of the people who have made those remarks have sought to apologize, the best thing we can do is stop repeating them. That would be a good start.

Moving on, it is important that we reaffirm the continuing and ongoing agenda, as I mentioned in my speech, that we have with the United States. In my most recent conversations with Secretary Ridge, we have been quite capable to reaffirm the work that we want to continue to do and to build on the cooperation that we have.

As I also said in my speech, we can be of greatest assistance to the Americans by constructively supporting them, not simply blindly following them. The opportunity to offer that constructive support in the aftermath of this conflict will be evident and it will be a burden that we must bear.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the Deputy Prime Minister speak with words of non-participation in the war in Iraq, and then also listen to him quote former Prime Minister Pearson.

Supply

The reality is that we are participating. We are participating because the government is allowing our troops, sailors and airmen to be involved. Doing it in a fashion that is unsafe for our troops is simply not fair to them and not fair to the Canadian people either. If we have taken a position based upon our principles of multi-lateralism and support for the UN that we are not going to be involved, then we must pursue that.

When former Prime Minister Pearson had the opportunity to be involved in a similar situation regarding the Vietnam war, he did not allow any of our troops to participate. I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, is that not a precedent that the government should be following?

• (1140)

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious question and not an easy one to answer.

Let me say there are principles that can coexist but are not mutually exclusive. One of the principles that is involved here is that we share a close degree of cooperation between Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and some other countries in terms of military cooperation. We are allies in NATO. The practice of having exchanges among officers is one that is well established. In this circumstance, while our troops are not there under the Canadian flag, clearly for certain principles which I have explained, some are there in fulfillment of exchange obligations.

They are involved in a conflict which we felt could have been resolved differently in the sense that a greater level of international consensus could have been achieved if more time had been allowed. We worked very hard at that. However, we share the ultimate objective of disarming the Saddam Hussein regime.

Therefore, the principle that they should fulfill their duties in accordance with their obligations to allied forces is a principle that can be respected at the same time. They do not necessarily become mutually exclusive principles.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the Deputy Prime Minister. I appreciated and agreed with many of his comments.

I would like to know whether he will support the motion or not? He has mentioned the idea of tabling another motion today. He knows that will be out of order. We will be voting on the motion that is before the House as a business of supply. It is important for Canadians to know and they will eventually see in the vote whether the government will support these four simple but profound principles that are in the motion. I would like him to address that and that alone will set the debate for the day.

Hon. John Manley: Mr. Speaker, I outlined the foundation for a resolution which I would hope that both sides of the House could support. The hon. member will know that if his party refuses to adopt a motion that we can all support, it is still open to the government to table a motion at any time, which is what we would do.

It is my hope that at this time we could put aside the partisanship at least for a day and agree on a common motion that we would all be able to support.

Supply

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like the Speaker to pay particular attention to Standing Order 81(2) which states:

On any day or days appointed for the consideration of any business under the provisions of this Standing Order [which is the business of supply], that order of business shall have precedence over all other government business in such sitting or sittings.

Any effort to supplant today's supply day motion with another motion would be out of order throughout the day. I encourage the government House leader and the Deputy Prime Minister to keep that in mind as we debate this important issue.

• (1145)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): In his speech, the Deputy Prime Minister indicated, in so many words, that there would be the possibility of tabling another motion at some other point in time. He was not precise in saying that it would be today. Therefore, I am inviting the hon. member or his House leader to check with the government House leader as to what the intentions would be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

Motions often contain several elements. The motion before us now is no exception. This motion contains exactly four elements, and as always, parties and members are confronted with the fact that they must balance the pros and cons. Obviously, there are elements of this motion that are very valid. However, other elements are less so, and some are not valid at all. Allow me to explain.

Let us look at the first part, the part dealing with apologies regarding comments made by colleagues, either in or outside the House. This has usually occurred outside the House. I think we have to establish the right balance between freedom of expression and responsibility. Of course, when one is a legislator, a member of Parliament, one has to be careful about what one says. However, our freedom of expression must not give us the right to go so far as to make comments that could jeopardize diplomatic or economic relations.

This is what happened as a result of comments made by certain colleagues from the Liberal party. These comments, in our opinion, were unjustified. In fact, the United States of America is geographically very close, it is much bigger than us and it is our main trading and diplomatic partner. Therefore we must be careful when a member of Parliament makes statements that I do not even care to repeat in the House. Everyone understands that this is unacceptable. If the motion asked that the House of Commons make an apology, I am sure that the Bloc Québécois would support it.

As for the second element, that we reaffirm the United States to be our closest friend and ally, the Bloc Québécois would also, obviously, agree with it. There is no question about that, since we are so intimately linked by our history.

Many years ago, I created what I call a triangle of excellence in my region with my city and American cities in the states of Vermont and New York. Each time I go to the State of New York, particularly Plattsburgh, I am reminded of the great battle of Plattsburgh, where

the American navy sunk the British navy. I often joke that, had it not been for the American navy in 1812, they would probably all be Canadians today. They go on and on about this battle, and I often say that a quarter of a century earlier, in 1775, General Montgomery came down with American ships and was stuck for 49 days in my riding. I must tell Canadians listening to me today that, were it not for the strong resistance movement in the Saint-Jean region, we would probably all be Americans today. They do not find this very funny. But it is all between friends.

We must not think that the current dispute between Canada and the U.S. threatens this kind of exchange. I am continuing such exchanges. I met with Senators Clinton and Shumer, of New York state, and also with Senators Leahy and Jeffords, from Vermont. We are still able to talk to one another and get past our differences to discuss economic, cultural, social and other exchanges. But, such statements, obviously, do not help matters.

I think that more evidence of this was seen this morning. Ambassador Cellucci was reluctant to discuss the fact that Canada was not taking part in this war. I will come back to this point because, in my opinion, we are taking part. Ambassador Cellucci was saying that Washington had taken note of the very strong statements made about Washington. I think that it is terrible that this occurred. This fosters anti-Americanism and, on this point, the Bloc Québécois wants to state loud and clear that we are not anti-American.

The second element, however, makes reference to friendship. We are friends and, as in any relationship between friends, this does not mean we always have to agree. It means we can tell the other that he has made a mistake. That is what the people of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois have been doing from the start. We think the President of the United States made a mistake. So now are we going to put them all into one category and call them a bunch of so-and-so's? We will not do that. We can retain our critical judgment and ask our friend to reconsider. That is, I think, what we have wanted to do from the start of the debate, and what we want to continue to do.

• (1150)

Now for the third element, which is problematical for us. I must remind hon. members that we believe UN resolution 1441 called for the disarmament of Iraq, peaceful disarmament. Chief inspector Hans Blix made several reports, and we saw some progress being made by the inspections.

In our opinion, resolution 1441 did not specify that military force ought to be resorted to. We have always had objections to this type of military intervention because of that belief. I would also remind hon. members that this resolution dealt with disarmament and not with a change of regime.

So why should we in the Bloc Québécois change our attitude now? Why should we now say that, since the coalition forces are there, they might as well put an end to that regime? I must remind you that the Prime Minister has even stated in this House that this could not be done, that he was not in favour of it. We have said the same in several speeches: if we allow that, we will end up with military intervention in North Korea, Iran or Syria, because we do not like their regimes. I believe this needs to be settled at the UN. It is the ideal international forum for settling disputes and differences between nations; otherwise, we will end up with the law of the jungle.

The third element of this motion is very harsh. It states that we “hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power”. This is very warlike wording. Not only do we not agree with the substance of it, but we do not agree, either, with the wording of this motion.

I heard the Deputy Prime Minister say that, in principle, we are not directly engaged in this war. However, the hypocrisy of the Liberal government must be pointed out. A few weeks ago, in a grand statement, the minister told us that we would not take part in a military intervention in Iraq, yet we now have soldiers in Iraq who are taking part in the operation. They are not there to disarm the regime, but to destroy it. This needs to be made clear. A Canadian soldier in Iraq under the command of British or American forces is taking part in the American and British mission, which is to destroy the regime.

The government is not out of the woods with this attitude and this position. We believe, that since the beginning, we should have pulled out our troops, withdrawn our equipment, and this would have been consistent with the statement made by the Prime Minister to the effect that we would not be taking part in this war in Iraq. As long as we have soldiers there, be it 30 or 300, we are participating in the war in Iraq, and for us, this is unacceptable.

We also take issue with the fourth element of the motion. It refers to a coalition to reconstruct Iraq. Some of the great losers in this conflict, in addition to the people of Iraq, are international institutions such as the UN. The UN has been sidelined in all this. The inspection process, which was supported by most UN countries, was aborted. We were in the process of disarming the regime. It would have taken more time, but the United States and Great Britain started up the hostilities, which brought an end to the inspections.

I think that we should make some efforts. Canada should make the effort and say to its American and British friends, “Listen, we have to make the UN a respectable institution once more”. To do that, the international community, along with the UN, has to deal with the issue of reconstruction. One nation alone cannot accomplish the reconstruction, any more than it can impose a military government. The UN must be responsible.

In conclusion, I would say that Quebec has always been opposed to this war. Quebec believes firmly in multilateralism. The goal was to disarm Iraq peacefully and that did not succeed; the inspectors were making progress. Military intervention was not the solution. We would prefer that the reconstruction of Iraq take place under the aegis of the United Nations.

Supply

We have weighed the pros and cons, as I said before, and we have debated it at length, and the Bloc Québécois, for all the reasons I have listed, will not vote in favour of the Canadian Alliance's motion.

● (1155)

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague, the member for Saint-Jean, for his excellent speech. For the benefit of those who are listening, I would like to read the motion moved by the Canadian Alliance. It reads as follows:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and; hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

I would like to begin my comments by talking about what the motion does not contain. It makes no reference to the heart of the matter, which is whether or not international law is being complied with.

This type of conflict was supposed to have been solved following the terrible second world war by the establishment of the United Nation, in 1948. As such, it became illegal for a sovereign state to attack another sovereign state without the permission of this great assembly, known as the United Nations, which was technically represented by the Security Council.

Those, then, are the rules of civility that were set out to require that states no longer act arbitrarily, that they no longer act unilaterally and based on their own aggressive interests. That is the spirit of international law on this issue. And the depository of international law in this case is the United Nations.

What is worrisome here is that those who were asked to demonstrate the need for this aggression, as the Vatican has described it, were not at all able to do so. The Vatican stated that if a country took upon itself to intervene in this matter, based on its own authority and without the support of the UN, then it was an aggression and not a war. These words are important words. And neither Colin Powell, during his presentations, nor by Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, managed to demonstrate the need for, let alone the legitimacy of, this war. The inspectors, who were on site in Iraq, mandated by the UN to verify if Iraq had the capacity to use weapons of mass destruction, were even less able to demonstrate the need for or legitimacy of this war.

Up to now, all the inspections have showed that there was no cause for concern. Perhaps, with time, if the inspections had continued, weapons of mass destruction would have been found. However, none were nor have been yet—we must remember this—even during the current aggression against Iraq. Never did we hear about any weapons of mass destruction being found.

Since this war is not legitimate and the need has not been proven, there is a universal and international outcry. Millions of people have physically manifested their disapproval of this unilateral gesture. It is important to remember this, because institutions and international law are being ignored. Neither individuals nor sovereign states have the right to take the law into their own hands.

Supply

Obviously, on September 11, 2001, the Americans suffered a terrible blow. They are still suffering. Their national pride has taken a beating, but this does not justify—not for states nor for individuals—taking the law into their own hands. It is essential not to forget this.

As for the motion as presented by the Canadian Alliance, I too have reservations. I am glad that my hon. colleague, the member for Saint-Jean, said what he did about the offensive and inappropriate statements. In fact, the right of members to speak is protected, but this privilege must be used properly. However, it is also dangerous for a political party to point fingers and jeopardize freedom of expression. It becomes essential, in situations as sensitive as these, to respect the freedom of expression of the people's elected representatives. I hope that the Canadian right considered that before writing this.

• (1200)

As for the bonds of friendship between the United States of America, Canada and Quebec, these are obvious.

Quebec has four U.S. states as neighbours. Quebeckers feel great affection for the American people. Everyone knows how many Quebeckers have property in Florida, or visit there regularly. Our emotional and tourist connections with the entire eastern seaboard is well known, particularly Boston, Cape Cod, Myrtle Beach, Old Orchard and so on. How many of us are familiar with New York City, the victim of the terrible attack we are all familiar with? Some, myself included, have had the privilege of travelling to New Orleans, in Louisiana, a wonderful city with its Spanish-French flavour, Bourbon Street and all the rest.

There are historical connections as well as commercial ones, and the latter are of such importance that, as a result, to echo what my colleague from Saint-Jean has said, we are not going to end a friendship because we disagree with our friend.

In this connection, President Chirac had some marvellous words to say about the historic connection between France and the United States, which ought not to be threatened by France's attitude in advising its friend not to go down this dead-end path, in other words, that victory without risk brings triumph without glory. This is more or less what is happening and is, I think, the message old Europe wanted to pass to the Americans before any physical intervention in Iraq with its longtime friend, Great Britain.

I think, as far as friendship is concerned, there is no ambiguity on this concept. Disagreement does not put an end to friendship.

The third Alliance proposal is a very serious one. To quote:

—that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power;

Giving support to such a proposal is tantamount to supporting anarchy. This must be realized. Resolution 1441 directly addressed the disarmament of Iraq, not a change of regime. In this connection, the Prime Minister was very quick to act in denouncing the slippage from one concept to the other.

If it is valid today for Iraq, why would it not be valid later for Iran or Syria? It is obvious that there are risks in this. In the same way, why not Korea against Japan or vice versa? Why not China against

Taiwan? Why not India against Pakistan and vice versa? Why not the United States against Cuba or against Venezuela? When it is not what they want, will they change the regime?

This is too easy, and it is anarchy. We must stand firmly opposed. When the role of the United Nations is ignored, this is the kind of slippery slope that lies ahead.

Finally, the last proposal, that the House “urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq”, takes us even farther down that slippery slope. On the day after the victory we know is coming, the coalition will maintain its leadership. Quasi-anarchy will be maintained even though the reconstruction of Iraq ought to be the responsibility of the international community, as represented internationally by the United Nations.

Therefore, we must insist—and this is urgent—that the reconstruction take place under the responsibility of the United Nations—that it be funded by the coalition—this is something I personally want to see—that it be well managed and that we avoid destabilizing the whole region—for that is the risk.

We know that the Muslim world is taking this quite bitterly. We know that Syria and Jordan are near the boiling point and Egypt is in a difficult situation. We are walking on eggshells and this is not the time to put on our heavy boots. We must approach this with diplomacy and ensure that those who are responsible for the task take their responsibilities seriously.

• (1205)

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate today. I think it is extremely important for all members of Parliament to continue to be very much engaged, not so much in the debate around the tragedy of the unilateral choice made by our closest neighbour, the United States, in rejecting the peaceful disarmament of Saddam Hussein that was underway, but in staying focused very much on where we are now and on how we can get to a better, more peaceful place in the world of tomorrow.

I have briefly reviewed the motion that has been placed before us by the official opposition, the Alliance Party. I have to say this from the outset. Whether deliberately or not, because I guess motives do not actually count and in fact there is a question about whether it is parliamentary to judge motives, I think it has to be said that the Alliance has certainly put on the floor for debate a motion that it has made absolutely impossible for most members of the House to support. I want to very briefly say why that is so in dealing with the four basic elements of the motion.

I am going to pass over the first very briefly. Actually I agree generally with the sentiment of that motion, which may surprise some people, but I think what the Alliance has sought to do is to condemn offensive and inappropriate statements that have been made against the United States by various members of the House.

Supply

I have no trouble associating myself with the sense of regret about that, because I think that if one did not give some really thoughtful consideration to how destructive and counterproductive this could be before this morning's foreign affairs committee meeting, one could certainly not come away from that excellent foreign affairs committee this morning without being mindful of some of the important considerations that need to enter into how we actually debate substantively an issue as fundamentally important as this.

Before the foreign affairs committee this morning there was a really excellent pair of presenters, if I could put it that way, Professor Kim Richard Nossal from Queen's University and Professor Pierre Martin from the University of Montreal, both of whom addressed this issue in terms of what is a very important foreign policy dialogue going on in the country today, and I commend the foreign affairs minister for this, around the question of how we can on the one hand as Canadians absolutely maintain and strengthen our commitment to multilateralism while at the same time managing the relationship with the superpower or hyper-power, the United States of America of today, that is our closest neighbour.

What we really came away from that foreign affairs committee thinking about, and I hope it is true of all members, is that in some respects it has been the vagueness, the contradictions, the lack of substance, really, in the government's addressing of the issue about the war in Iraq that has created an environment in which the focus has tended to be more on inflammatory statements made on what I think one would characterize in many cases as unhelpful and provocative anti-Americanism.

I think there is a lesson in that for all of us, but I hope the government is prepared to listen to the argument that was made very skilfully and persuasively this morning: that if the government had been clearer about its position on the very question of the launching of a military offensive in Iraq rather than sort of playing around the edges with, "We are in favour of delaying to a certain date but not beyond a certain date, if we could delay the date", and never clearly setting out the substantive arguments for why Canada should not be participating in the war on Iraq, then I think we would have seen a display of leadership that would have been easier to stand behind. I think then we would have seen a follow-through such that, having said we were opposed to participating in a war on Iraq, we would actually ensure that we are living up to that position and not participating in the war on Iraq when in fact we are doing that. We have a government that is saying one thing and doing another.

• (1210)

Now I want to move to the more substantive parts of the motion, the first having to do with hoping "that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power". This goes to the heart of the single most unacceptable thing about the U.S. invoking a policy of regime change.

This is a very terrifying initiative that has been taken in a world where we thought we had made some substantial progress in creating the international architecture of the United Nations, in building up a body of international law and in establishing a charter of the United Nations, all of these to try to ensure that no country in the world feels free to engage in a pre-emptive strike against another country.

The concerns about this are obvious. If it is Iraq today, is it to be Saudi Arabia tomorrow? If the United States feels free to thumb its nose at the United Nations and launch a pre-emptive strike, then who tomorrow will feel free to launch a pre-emptive strike? Will it be North Korea? This is a really terrifying development in a world where we thought we had begun to make some real progress toward ensuring that the family of nations works together through the international body of the United Nations to deal with its principal objective, that is, to rid the world and future generations of the scourge of war.

The second substantive part of the resolution before us urges that the Government of Canada "assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq". This is also a very troublesome notion.

Had the official opposition, the Alliance, chosen to put forward a motion which urged that the Government of Canada participate and provide leadership in assisting with the reconstruction of Iraq and had it done so through the United Nations, then we would be first in line to say bravo. We would be the first in line to support that return to multilateralism, to support the return from this romp with chaos and hegemony to an orderly approach, to something that the world must rally to support, but must support through the United Nations.

It is not an accident that there is now a raging debate going on about how in the name of heaven we are to ensure that the United States, in its unilateralist mentality of the day, does not see its next step of world dominance being to reconstruct the supposedly liberated Iraq in its own image. This is a very great concern.

As the closest friends and neighbours of the United States, we have to urge, to coax and to persuade, to use every aspect of diplomacy available to us, to help the United States see that the world is poised and ready to contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq. This in fact is an appropriate role for Canada, having said no to the war in Iraq, to focus its attentions on. To state the obvious, if the Government of Canada were genuinely prepared to do what it said was its position for opposing the war, in other words, not to participate in the war, we would actually be saving millions, tens of millions, and potentially hundreds of millions of dollars, because one does not know any more what length of time this war is going to take. It certainly looks as though it is going to be longer than ever was imagined by the U.S. decision makers.

• (1215)

We could save hundreds of millions of dollars that could appropriately be directed to the reconstruction of Iraq, as it could be redirected to other critically important humanitarian needs in the world, including one that we have been speaking about in the Chamber, and we will continue to do so until the Canadian government does live up to its commitments, for example, to pay its proportionate share to the global fund to deal with the HIV-AIDS pandemic.

The issue is not whether Canada should play a role in the reconstruction of Iraq. Of course it should. What is fundamentally important is that we do so within the framework of multilateralism and the well-established body that exists through the United Nations to do that in the most effective, the most efficient and the most sensitive way.

Supply

I do not want to dwell on the fact that the Alliance—and perhaps I should not predict but we will see—appears as though it is more interested in introducing a motion that it makes impossible for us to support when it once again takes this totally unilateralist view and talks only about the coalition doing the reconstruction of Iraq.

I know that when one speaks in these terms, when one criticizes the decision of the Bush administration to plunge the United States and the world into this tragic war in Iraq, one is often accused of being anti-American. In the moments that remain to me I will quote a couple of American politicians who themselves, after I think a disappointing period of silence and complicity for many American politicians, have found their voices and appear to have found courage, and who are now speaking out, in response, I think, to a great deal of anti-war mobilization by large numbers of Americans.

I start with a Democratic congressman from Ohio by the name of Dennis Kucinich. Some will know that he has become an articulate voice, not just in opposing the U.S. launching the war but now in an increasing crescendo urging that the war be stopped and that it be stopped now. We are pleased to associate ourselves with that position.

At the absolute minimum, unless we are to turn our backs on a humanitarian tragedy of monumental proportions, there has to be a ceasefire, and a ceasefire now, in order to get the food aid, the humanitarian aid and the medical aid in to deal with the increasing numbers of casualties that are occurring and the widespread hunger that will lead to premature death, even among those who have not been directly injured in the hostilities and the violence.

Let me quote briefly from Dennis Kucinich, the U.S. congressman:

Stop the war now. As Baghdad will be encircled, this is the time to get the UN back in to inspect Baghdad and the rest of Iraq. Our troops should not have to be the ones who will find out...whether...[there are biological and chemical] weapons.

This of course goes to the very point of how tragic it is, of why it is so tragic that the U.S. chose to shut down, because that is what happened, the peaceful weapons inspection process that was taking place. Because of course what we have now is a situation where not only are the weapons inspections not taking place, but if there were any genuine belief in spite of the absence of any real evidence, if there were any genuine belief about biological and chemical weapons being present in Iraq, then would not the last thing on earth one would want be to engage in hostilities that would unleash those weapons?

Mr. Kucinich goes on to make the argument that before the sending of any troops into house to house combat in Baghdad, a city of five million people, surely we have to put a stop to this before we create the kind of casualties that are going to be involved but also before we put troops in a position that is so absolutely and horrifyingly unsafe, destroying both body and soul of all of those who end up locked into that war.

● (1220)

This brings me back to the question of Canada's complicity. I do not know how else to describe it. While the Prime Minister took the position officially, for which he had our congratulations and support, that Canada would not participate in the war, we now know that in

fact Canadian troops are involved in that war. I think it is very hard for people to have confidence in the moral authority of the government or, frankly, in the truth telling of the government if it says that we will not participate and then, when challenged to address the evidence that was coming more and more to the fore, to then say that we were still not participating despite the evidence, to the point now where the government essentially is saying that it decided to have it both ways.

As a member of Parliament who proudly represents the riding of Halifax, I am deeply disturbed about the safety of our troops who find themselves in that impossible position in which the government has placed them. There is reason to be concerned about whether the protections under the Geneva convention would apply to Canadian troops who are participating in someone else's war at the very time that its own government is saying that we are not participating.

The fact is that the evidence is there for all to see. The government can no longer deny, even though it tried initially to mask the evidence, that we have Canadian military men and women on Iraqi soil, on ships that are accompanying warships involved in the Iraqi war, and in the air. What are they doing in the air? They are participating in the targeting of air strikes, of bombings in Iraq.

I know my time is almost up but I have to say that it makes no sense whatsoever for Canada to have taken the position that it took of non-participation and then turn around and hide behind what is a grotesque misrepresentation. It is an act of deception for the Prime Minister, the defence minister and the foreign affairs minister to say that the reason they are leaving the Canadian troops, at least 1,331 troops that have been acknowledged, who are involved in the combat zone, in there is because of an agreement Canada has with the U.S., the U.K. and Australia and one that we do not want to turn our backs on. That agreement specifically says that in the event of a war in which one of those countries becomes involved and in which Canada is not participating, then we bring our troops home.

Furthermore, that has always been the case. I do not know of a single example, although there may be one that proves the exception, but there are many examples for which military personnel and retired military personnel who are free to speak the truth know that under similar circumstances of a combat or a war in which Canada was a non-participant, we brought our troops home.

● (1225)

I will finish by pleading with government members to address this issue, to remove this deception that is being perpetrated on Canadians and to live up to our own obligations to our own military and to our own agreements.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among the parties and I believe that if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That following the conclusion of the debate on today's Canadian Alliance opposition motion all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put, a recorded division demanded and deferred until 3 p.m. Tuesday, April 8.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Does the House give its consent to the motion?

Some hon. member: Agreed.

Supply

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Prince George—Peace River said earlier today, one of the great things about this country is that we can voice an opinion completely contrary to the government or to the official opposition and know that there is no consequences, except perhaps political consequences, for doing so. We can only wish that such was the case in Iraq.

I do agree with the member when she says that the government has never clearly laid out the substantive arguments for or against being in the conflict. It has tried to sit on the fence so much that it must be steadily picking splinters out of its backside. It is not fun to watch. It is not what a government should do in these times. I agree with her that it is not fun to watch.

I do not agree with the NDP's position but I respect its consistency. For example, it has said that it believes in working through the United Nations. However its leader has already expressed that even if the United Nations were to declare that the United Nations should go in to disarm Iraq, it still would not go. In other words, it would respect multilateralism, except that even if the UN were to agree to go into Iraq, it still would not go in. It is a pacifist position but it is not consistent even with her own statement.

She also said that real progress is made by working through the United Nations. I remember back to when our own General Dallaire begged with all he was worth for the United Nations to intervene in Rwanda. In fact he temporarily lost his sanity over it. He begged the United Nations to come in and prevent the slaughter in Rwanda. The United Nations was powerless, impotent and useless at a critical hour.

On the other hand, when we wanted the United Nations to go in and stop the ethnic cleansing that Milosevic was perpetrating on the people of Kosovo, the United Nations would not do it. Instead, we went without the United Nations' approval. I think most Canadians and certainly Kosovars were glad we did.

The member said that she could not support the motion because it wants to support the coalition in its reference to the reconstruction of Iraq. I do not know why she is against this. I saw Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, on TV a week ago saying that he expects the United States to pick up the bill for the reconstruction of Iraq. The UN will not do it, but of course the U.S. is already picking up the bill.

It is interesting that as it moves its armaments into Kuwait and into Iraq that the supply ships, with the aid, the reconstruction materials and the medicine for the people of Iraq, were side by side with the warships to make sure the aid got through. The Americans were not waiting for the United Nations. If they did that, the people of Iraq would starve to death. They are providing that help and assistance already, even before the United Nations has a game plan on how it might be done.

The member mentioned that it would be horrible if the U.S. wanted to create Iraq in its own image. I do not think the United States wants to recreate Iraq in its own image, although some of that would not be all that bad. What if Iraq actually ended up with a democracy? What if it ended up with property rights, with the right

to benefit from its own resources, and with a human rights code that would prohibit the systemic abuse of its own citizens? That would not be such a bad thing. I think it would be a worthwhile thing. Of course that is what this whole effort from the coalition is about.

• (1230)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I get equal time to respond because there were about five question there. However let me very quickly try to address them.

The first one is around the question of how the New Democratic Party can argue strenuously for multilateralism but then say that we are unalterably opposed to Canada participating in a war in Iraq. Well I will tell members why.

I think one has to take a clear position based on an evaluation of the situation as we know it. In this case we chose to take a position of leadership to try to prevent this war and to do so through the United Nations. We have always been realistic that if that failed, then every individual nation at the end of the day would have to exercise its judgment and its sovereignty. No country totally gives over the decision to any other body, including the United Nations, to compel it to enter a war.

It has to be acknowledged that Canada has a role to play and it has to choose how best to play that role. The overwhelming sentiment of Canadians is that our best role is in relation to the humanitarian efforts in this tragic situation and to the reconstruction. Anyone who does not acknowledge that reality, even on the basis of our existing military personnel being overstretched, they are turning their back on the obvious.

It is not a question of whether one is absolutely committed to multilateralism. It is a question of taking a responsible decision in the face of realities and in the face of events, which is why our position in the New Democratic Party is that we stand against this war. Our position has always been that Canada's best role should first be in preventing it. I believe it has been the wobbling and the waffling of the government that has caused confusion about where Canada stood in terms of prevention.

Canada's second role, in the event of war happening, should be its commitments to humanitarian aid and reconstruction.

On the issue of Rwanda, I have to say that of all the examples that get evoked again and again as the most persuasive examples of the inadequacies and failures of the United Nations, Rwanda seems to me to be a very instructive one.

Let me say that we agree that Rwanda was a colossal failure but what the Alliance fails to say every time it invokes Rwanda is that the two powers that stood most strenuously against intervention in Rwanda were the United States and the United Kingdom, which surely is a great irony and part of the historical picture that should be understood.

Supply

Yes, the United Nations is not perfect, and yes, there have been big failures, but surely those are reasons to strengthen the United Nations and make it a more effective body. In addition to the humanitarian effort and the reconstruction of Iraq, we also need to turn our attention to the kinds of reforms that are necessary to make the United Nations more effective. Among those, surely, is the desperate necessity to turn our attention to the issue of weapons of mass destruction, not just in the hands of Iraq or of a rogue nation, but in the hands of any nation in the world.

We need to address ourselves to that question because the capability of the human species to destroy the future of the world, both the planet and the human family, is awesome and should be very sobering as we address the bigger question of weapons of mass destruction needing to be stripped from the earth.

• (1235)

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my comment is not directed for the hon. member for Halifax but for the member across the way who made reference, I think casually and perhaps more callously than he had intended, in recalling the after effects of General Roméo Dallaire's condition, to losing his mind.

I think it would be far better to refer to the fact the General Dallaire did indeed suffer post-traumatic stress syndrome, was extraordinarily courageous in sharing that, and by doing so, helped facilitate a very strong set of programs within the Canadian armed forces to help those returning from that kind of a situation to assist them with that in recognition of it.

The incredible stature of Roméo Dallaire and all that he has been doing since, and the recognition given everywhere of a truly Canadian hero, should in no way be smirched by a casual and careless remark.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, let me say that the member and I do not often agree on many things, but I think this is a very important point. General Dallaire is a genuine Canadian hero and a genuine, if I can say this, mentor to peace-loving people around the world.

This is a funny way to get something onto the agenda of the foreign affairs committee; I know there is another route. What we need to do as parliamentarians, and perhaps the foreign affairs committee is the route, as we come up to the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, is to inform ourselves and bring in both General Dallaire and some of the Canadian analysts who have been part of the detailed inquiry into the Rwanda genocide. As was said this morning at the foreign affairs committee by witnesses, we only will fail to repeat our mistakes of the past if we learn from our history.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I need to address what was just raised in the House. None of my remarks were meant to besmirch the reputation of Mr. Dallaire, whom I hold in the highest esteem. I last heard him speak at the national prayer breakfast. He is a man admired by all Canadians and I am among them.

The point I was trying to make was that he was not supported by the United Nations and I think that was a shame.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for St. John's West.

To warm up I want to read into the record the opposition motion that we are debating today:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

We support that motion. I am glad it is before the House because some of the points that have been made and some of the language used by government members are uncalled for. They are undisciplined and very condescending and Canada will pay a price for that. In fact it is paying a price today in our relations with the United States of America.

We can disagree on what started this in terms of the war. We can disagree on the United Nations process and the Americans acting unilaterally, but at the end of the day, there is a way to express those feelings without resorting to the kind of language that some government members have used in the past number of weeks. They continue to do that because the Prime Minister allows them to do it.

If we look at the Prime Minister's record as a politician, the theme of anti-Americanism runs consistently throughout his career. I have many examples, Mr. Speaker, some of which you have been privy to, some of which you have experienced yourself. I want to go through some of them.

It goes back partly to when the Progressive Conservatives formed the government in 1984. One of the first things they wanted to do was to abolish the Foreign Investment Review Agency, FIRA. That was shortly before your time in the House, Mr. Speaker. The Liberals raged against that. Their position was not founded on reason, principle or fact in any way. It was simply an attack on America, because the Foreign Investment Review Agency had been set up by Prime Minister Trudeau specifically to keep American investment out of Canada. That was what it was set up to do. One could argue that it had an impact on European nations and Asian nations as well, but it clearly targeted the United States. We paid a big price for that in terms of lost investment and opportunity in Canada.

That was the start. The present Prime Minister encouraged that type of rhetoric, that type of debate in terms of the Liberal opposition to that initiative taken. It carried into the free trade debate and the 1988 election, the election which saw me enter the House of Commons as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker.

I know some of these remarks may be painful for you, Mr. Speaker, but I want to remind you and the listening public that again the Liberals at the time took a very undisciplined approach to that initiative. The language was very condescending. Their position had very little to do with reason, fact or principle. They were just raging against an agreement which they considered un-Canadian. The anti-American sentiments that came out of that election, I believe, took a heavy toll on the Liberal Party. Some Liberals survived.

However the fact is that the Canadian public sometimes sees through that smokescreen, that veil of protectionism. When we came back to the House of Commons following that election, and again the Liberal Party took a particular position on it, one of the things we attempted to do immediately was to join the Organization of American States.

● (1240)

That organization includes not only the United States but just about all the South American countries as well, including Mexico. It is a bilateral group which is there to promote economic and political stability within this hemisphere.

The language coming from the Liberals at that time again was totally anti-American. It had nothing to do with reason, fact or principle. It was simply anti-American. The litany of the sense of what the Liberal Party was all about came to the floor of the House of Commons day after day. It was nothing really to do with fact or reason.

When it came to the gulf war in 1990-91, I can remember, the former prime minister of Canada, John Turner, standing in his place in the House supporting the United Nations initiative to take action in the gulf. When he spoke in the House of Commons in support of the Conservative government's position, every single member of the Liberal Party left the chamber. He was standing alone, a former prime minister of Canada, because he was the only one in the Liberal Party at that time who had enough backbone to stand up and support what the rest of the world was doing through the United Nations in the gulf.

The enemy was the same enemy, Saddam Hussein, who had invaded Kuwait after having invaded Iran.

The Liberals' position was totally based on that familiar theme of anti-Americanism. Public opinion turned on the issue. Eventually the public got behind that. They could see that this guy by the name of Saddam Hussein, this monster, had to be dealt with. When the public got behind the issue, eventually the Liberal Party got behind it. The present Prime Minister, then the leader of the opposition, stood in his place in the House and completely changed his position but with a qualifier. He said that they would support sending troops to the gulf but if hostilities or war broke out, they would leave. He has not changed and neither has the Liberal Party.

One article I was reading the other day pointed to an open mike at a NATO summit that the Prime Minister was attending in Brussels in 1997. He did not know the mike was turned on and he said of his foreign policy that it was not to do what the Americans do but if one railed against the Americans one would be successful as the prime minister of Canada.

We paid a big price for that. Individual members of Parliament now have to take it upon themselves to resolve problems that normally would be resolved by the Government of Canada if we had a strong relationship between our government and the government in Washington, which we do not have. I can speak of circumstances in my own riding. I have to work directly with American senators and congressmen to resolve border issues simply because there is no goodwill in Washington and Ottawa. We cannot rely on that goodwill to resolve problems.

Supply

When the phone rings in Washington today and if the call is coming from a cabinet minister or anyone remotely connected with the Liberal government, they simply do not answer the phone or do not return the call. What they are telling us, and it is coming from businessmen all across the country, is we are going to pay a price for this in terms of investment and opportunity.

● (1245)

There are many examples today where we have started to pay that price. There are contracts in the aerospace industries that are just not happening because they do not want to do business with us. Tourism is going to suffer.

We must put an end to those remarks. The Prime Minister should have condemned those types of remarks to make it perfectly clear to Washington, Ottawa, and Canadians that they are not acceptable.

● (1250)

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend who has just finished speaking. I find it rather interesting because the usual line from the opposition parties when they are talking about the Prime Minister and his caucus is that the Prime Minister is allegedly some kind of dictator who exercises thought control over the caucus and the caucus cannot do anything without his approval.

Yet, the hon. member just a few minutes ago stood up and said that with regard to these unfortunate remarks made by certain members the Prime Minister just let them do it. The hon. member cannot have it both ways.

When it comes to these two or three unfortunate remarks that have been made over the last two or three weeks, no one on this side condones those kinds of remarks. Those things happen. They are unfortunate and regrettable.

When we disagree with our American friends—and they are our best friends, we support them and we are not anti-American—we do not personalize it. When we find that this has happened on a couple of occasions, that is regrettable. The Deputy Prime Minister made it very clear this morning that this kind of talk is not condoned.

There is not a strain of anti-Americanism on this side. I find it regrettable that the opposition members would use the kind of language and make the kinds of allegations that would in effect tear the relationship that exists between Canada and the United States. We have a strong relationship. We are solid friends.

While there may have been in the past two or three regrettable remarks on this side of the House, the kind of talk from opposition members would equally, if not more, contribute to the possible deterioration in the relationship which remains strong and will get stronger.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a member who built his career on anti-American statements in the 1988 election. That is one of the reasons he was elected. If members recall, we were going to become the 51st state, which was totally illogical.

Supply

The Prime Minister's hold on his caucus varies depending on the situation. For example, the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, when the war started, was very hawkish. He totally supported the American position to act unilaterally, contrary to most of the members on his side of the House. Two weeks later he completely flip-flopped his position. In other words, he was questioning the legality of the war and that the Americans should not have gone in.

There is only one reason that he changed his position. His position was changed by the heavy-handedness of the Prime Minister who basically took one of his backbenchers aside and said, "Listen. That is not our position. We do not support this. You're not going to support it". The member went back home and completely reversed his position. He swallowed himself whole and was forced to do so by the Prime Minister.

The only other thing that we could logically assume from that position was that some of his constituents were telling him that they favoured his original position. However, there is no question of the Prime Minister having things his way and not allowing any dissension within the ranks.

I do not think the member opposite has to give us his interpretation of how the Prime Minister acts and reacts. There is plenty of evidence out there for Canadians to see. What they see they do not like. Perhaps they could learn from some of the comments made by the Deputy Prime Minister because he is taking one of the few reasonable positions among all the frontbench members on the government side.

• (1255)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from New Brunswick Southwest for sharing his time. He has already stated our position on the motion. I will confine my remarks directly to that motion, which I am sure will both surprise and please the House.

The motion itself is a two part motion. One part deals with the unfortunate comments made not only by backbenchers but by front line ministers in the government. That must be a concern not only to the party but to the House and to the country because these remarks have been carried more so than the common sense, solid, responsible debate that has gone on in the House and in the country.

I do not blame some of the backbenchers because I am sure it is out of frustration. They see a Prime Minister, who most of them do not support anyway, who has waffled back and forth on the issue of involvement, and they see the person who they think will be their next leader disappear completely from the scene. Where is the next messiah of the Liberal Party in all of this? It is a question everyone is asking. He is doing what he has always done on major issues, he has ducked.

The other unfortunate thing about the first part of the resolution, which requests an apology, is from whom the request comes. It is like the old story of the pot and the kettle because the leader of the Alliance, who is asking for the apology, called the Minister of National Defence an idiot some time ago and I do not believe has apologized. It is pretty hard to expect others to apologize when he himself makes similar insulting remarks and refuses to apologize. Having said that, let us say that apologies should be made. Those remarks should not have been made in the first place. Let us get on

with supporting our friends and allies, which is really the crux of the resolution.

It is difficult to know where the government stands. From the beginning the Prime Minister gave varying answers. Every time we picked up a newspaper, listened to him in the House or in scrums, we got a similar type of confusing response that did not clearly indicate where the government or the country was in all of this. The government was totally supporting a Bloc resolution that stated:

That this House call upon the government not to participate in the military intervention initiated by the United States in Iraq.

The Prime Minister and the government totally supported the resolution. The following day the Minister of National Defence was asked whether we would participate if biological weapons were found or if germ warfare was used? He responded that just because the government voted for a resolution did not mean it could not change its mind. It is complete and utter inconsistency.

Day after day we are told we are not participating and yet we have troops actively involved. We have ships that are in position and undoubtedly are playing a part in the war that is going on. I am not saying that is wrong. They should be there. I agree with them being there and we should solidly support them. We should not deny that they exist. We are telling 30 individuals and their families that we deny the fact that they are involved. Let us respect the people who are involved in this confrontation. Let us support our own people, our allies, and our friends.

I listened to the minister speak this morning because I thought I would hear something of significance. He said that our friends are at war. They certainly are and we should be there to help them, not to stay home, watch them on television and cheer.

• (1300)

Once people across Canada understood what was happening their support started to shift. This happened in Australia where the Prime Minister came under tremendous pressure when he indicated that his country would be participating in this confrontation. The people of Australia strongly supported that move because it was the right thing to do. They knew Australia had to go in with its friends.

Our Prime Minister has said clearly that if the United Nations had sanctioned the war, it would have been okay. However, he said that his government did not agree with regime change. The minister said this morning that when the war is over and Saddam is gone, we will move in and help with restructuring, et cetera. He wants Saddam gone. He is saying we need regime change to protect the people of Iraq and the rest of us in the free world. This will be a great subject for a thesis for someone down the line when an analysis is done of the various conflicting statements that have come from the government in relation to the war.

The minister stated it was unfortunate that people booted the United States national anthem at some hockey games and other events. I agree with that statement. We have the right to disagree and we do disagree in the House. Many disagree vehemently with what is happening in the world today and Canada is part of that. I respect the right of individuals to disagree with my stand on an issue, but I hope they respect my right to disagree with them. That is true not only here, but across Canada and around the world.

Supply

While we can disagree with each other, if we are friends and part of an overall team then we should respect each other. Respect is the word lacking here and across the country. It is lacking mainly because of the signals being sent to Canadians from this very House. It is hard to expect someone who only picks up bits and pieces of information in the news media to respect our friends and neighbours.

When the going gets tough, that is the time friends should support each other. The going is tough now in the world. Even if we have no reserve players to boost the team, nobody to call up to help, we could at least tell our closest friends and neighbours that we support them morally. We did not do that in the beginning. It was clear that we did not support the effort. It is on the record here.

We should tell those countries that we can offer them our support. We can move our troops from Afghanistan. We can use our ships wherever needed to move in food and supplies and backup those countries where necessary. We will recognize the fact that our troops are involved, and we will support and strengthen them wherever we can.

The government has not handled this situation well, and unfortunately, Canada will pay a price for this. However, it is not too late to correct what we have done. We can do this by first recognizing the fact that we have insulted our friends. Not only did we ignore them but we insulted them. We can correct that with an apology. We can support our own military personnel and others who are involved to the hilt so we will have a better country. This way we will be surrounded by friends who will help us if they are needed. Collectively we can create a better world.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to the motion. I was one of the individuals who promoted and wrote part of it.

The motion is of particular significance for me because I live on the U.S.-Canada border in Abbotsford, British Columbia. I represent Langley—Abbotsford. Since both of those communities are on the border, they have great concerns over what the relationship will be in the future, what it is today and what it has been in the past.

On behalf of my constituents I want to express the great disappointment in the kind of statements that have been made. There were statements from the Prime Minister's Office by one of his employees and basically nothing happened as far as making those statements, such as indicating that the office of the president and the president being a moron. There is more to that statement than meets the eye.

In fact, I was in San Diego as a guest of Americans and Mexicans alike at the time the statement was made. I was there looking at the situation of drug rehabilitation programs in Mexico and the United States. I was speaking to a large number of elected officials from both of those countries when that comment came up.

I was completely flabbergasted as to the statement that was made. I could not believe anyone in Canada would make that statement, much less somebody closely associated with the Prime Minister's Office. It was one of the most embarrassing times I spent in 10 years of being a politician to try and explain my way out of that on behalf of the rest of the Canadians who could not believe it themselves.

Those kinds of statements made had not just an effect against the House of Commons. They were an affront to many Canadians, many Americans and many Mexicans quite frankly. These statements have reverberated around the world. They do not put our country in a good light.

As I have said, I represent Langley and Abbotsford. Both communities border on the United States. We depend a great deal on American business. We have many friends across the border. Many of the businesses in Langley and Abbotsford in particular operate in the United States. Cross-border shopping is a regular daily routine for us. Any comments that are made that are seen as an affront against the Americans are an affront against the people of my community as well.

I happened to be talking to one of our businessmen the other day. I have a letter from his company. This company operates in Langley and he was doing business in Washington state. The company in Washington state wrote back this letter:

After being reminded of—

—and a particular member's name is used and I will not mention it—

—remarks about us Americans, I won't be considering [the company] for the SIPS house I will build in Aberdeen, Washington. Canada should really repudiate the self-loathing [such and such]. I won't spend a dime in Canada until I hear that.

This affects my community. Letters such as this one were not asked for by me. It was sent out of the blue by a constituent yesterday. These kinds of things severely affect my community.

We in the Fraser Valley spend many of our weekends in the United States. I owned property in Washington state at one point. I do not now but I did. I spent many weekends with Americans.

● (1305)

The people who live in my area camp on a regular basis in Oregon, California, Washington State, all through Idaho and so on. We have a close relationship. There is no distinguishing feature, quite frankly, between us and our colleagues in the states near where I live. Their money becomes our money and our money becomes their money. The only difference is the exchange rate which I will not get into with the government on that problem.

Essentially, we ought never to excuse individuals who make those kinds of statements. As I said, the moron comment affected me deeply when I was talking to several hundreds of politicians in San Diego. Right on the back of that, a government minister said:

—the world expects someone who is the president of a superpower to be a statesman. I think he has let, not only Americans, but the world down in not being a statesman.

Supply

I heard the Deputy Prime Minister this morning chalk that off that we have freedom of speech in this country and cannot be responsible for people who make those kinds of comments. The individual is minister of the government and has the responsibility to conduct himself better than that and to make comments that are in the best interests of the government and the people of this nation. It is not just a matter of freedom of speech. The Prime Minister could have easily moved that individual out of cabinet, for instance. He could have said something. But just to support that kind of behaviour has a very dramatic effect on our communities.

Some members in the House who do not live close to the border see it in different ways in how they live and conduct themselves with our American colleagues. I can assure members that coming from a border community, both Langley and Abbotsford do not appreciate in any way those kinds of statements. We do not appreciate no action being taken against those who have made the statements. And we do not appreciate just chalking it off to freedom of speech. In our community this affects our daily living, our daily relationship with people.

Our communities in the Fraser Valley have some serious issues with Americans. There is the SE2 project. We have an environmental problem. An American company wants to establish a generating plant on the American side which would actually distribute air emissions well beyond our ability to handle the content of those emissions in the Fraser Valley.

It does not help our case whatsoever for government people, government associates and affiliates to be making those kinds of statements. We have a hard enough battle as it is trying to see our way through environmental boards, energy boards and so on. We do not need this kind of negative interference.

We have shopping issues. People are using our shopping centres on Sumas Way continually. Americans come across the border at Aldergrove continually. We do not need any hard feelings whatsoever to be created by the government.

My message to the government is for goodness sake, if it cannot control its people, then move them out of positions of influence.

We have a lot of good things to say about Americans. We have a lot of things to be thankful for by having such a country share our border. We just do not need irresponsible statements being made and no action being taken against those who make them.

I beseech the government on behalf of those of us who live on the border to please be diligent, be honourable and have the integrity to treat people, regardless of what country they live in, with the respect and dignity that we would expect ourselves.

• (1310)

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech and I certainly would agree with much of what he said.

I was particularly struck by the comments in the NDP speech a little while ago. Certainly one of the most reprehensible comments made around this issue came from a member of the NDP during the leadership campaign, suggesting that President George W. Bush spent his nights awake, trying to figure out how to kill more Iraqi

babies. Those comments came from a Christian man, a former minister, and were made about another Christian man. It was hard to believe how he could do that.

What struck me as even more peculiar was the NDP position here, demanding that the United States and the allied coalition stop the war and pull out of Iraq immediately. I do not think the member put a lot of thought into expressing that position, given the history of what happened back in 1991 when the United States did pull out of Iraq and what the result was.

Perhaps the member could comment on what he thinks the result would be if the U.S. pulled out of Iraq now and went back home. What would be the results for Iraqi women and children if the U.S. did that?

• (1315)

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, there would be no doubt about the consequences of the coalition pulling out of Iraq today. The President of the United States and the coalition forces have to finish the job this time around. As a consequence of that, for us to be one of the only countries in a longstanding history of coalitions with these people to be out of that is quite shameful.

At the very least our country could be digging ditches, driving trucks, feeding people, pitching tents. We do not have to send in an army; we do not have a large army. However, there are a lot of things we could be doing. It seems that the propensity of this country, more so the government, is to stay out of it, with the representatives of government saying statements that are completely inappropriate.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with great interest. I understand that the member lives along the border of the United States and Canada.

I have had the privilege to travel back and forth across the border many times, both before and after I got into politics. I have many friends down in the United States. I have had the opportunity to work down there. I have family down there too.

I have had phone calls from people in the United States, from friends of mine, saying that some of the comments that were made by the government, the government backbenchers and the minister have been played over and over on TV down there. I want the hon. member to know that it is not just us who are taking it seriously; the American people are taking what was said very seriously.

As the hon. member was saying, it impacts on his constituency, in the Langley area. I am from the interior where we rely very heavily upon the tourist industry. My big fear is that this will also have a financial impact on the Canada's tourism industry, particularly in our area. Does the hon. member share those same concerns?

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, I hope we will get beyond this and see less of an impact than we anticipate, but I can assure members that I know where I was when the statement, "Damn Americans, I hate those bastards" was made. The statement was made by an elected official of the government and nothing was done to that elected official.

Supply

In my community it is not just an affront to Americans, it is an affront to the people of Langley, Abbotsford, Aldergrove, Vancouver, and Prince George. It is an affront to people in Toronto and London, Ontario, everywhere. We have to get beyond this part of it.

I have to say that I am very disappointed in a government that will not take any action against statements like that.

• (1320)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by reading the motion again just to remind people exactly what we are debating today. This is a Canadian Alliance motion, presented by the leader of the Canadian Alliance. The motion reads:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

It seems to me that the motion probably could be passed by unanimous consent and I am sure we will see full support for it later in the day. It would be hard to understand how there could not be support for it.

I hope the government will recognize that we cannot get to the last part of our motion, which is to urge the government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq, of providing the necessary humanitarian assistance and having democracy, freedom and liberty in Iraq until the second last part of our motion is fulfilled; that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq remove Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. As long as his regime is in power, nothing that resembles a democracy or humanitarianism can possibly be instituted in that country.

Therefore, it is important that be reinforced. I hope now the government sees that. Certainly more and more Canadians are understanding that connection. They understand too that Saddam Hussein and his regime provide a very real, direct danger to our country and to Canadian citizens through their weapons of mass destruction and through many terrorist groups which are more than willing to deliver those weapons, as heinous as that sounds but then Saddam Hussein is not a nice man.

In approaching foreign affairs issues, we have seen the Liberal governments in Canada for the past 40 years or so seize every opportunity to differentiate Canadian foreign policy from that of the U.S. To be fair, Brian Mulroney and his government behaved differently. He treated our American neighbours and friends as neighbours and friends. As a result, we were able to negotiate extremely good trade agreements with our friends and neighbours.

His government deserves credit for that. It knew how we as a country should behave. In dealing with our best friend and neighbour, we should treat them as such. However, this government has taken every opportunity to differentiate between Canadian and American foreign policy, ignoring these great shared interests between our two countries.

The Liberals seem to believe that this enhances Canadian sovereignty somehow, disagreeing automatically. However sovereignty means the freedom to make decisions based on our own

values and interests, not based on the position of any other country or the United Nations for that matter.

The pressure to automatically oppose the United States, as this government so often does on major foreign policy issues, undermines Canadian sovereignty just as surely as the pressure to automatically support the United States and its position undermines Canadian sovereignty. In fact I would argue it is worse for any Canadian government to automatically oppose the United States. Most of the positions we take on foreign affairs issues and most of our values are shared. Canada and the U.S. seem to be on the same page since we share values and interests that determine our positions on these foreign affairs issues.

One very strong Canadian value is multilateralism. The government talks about that value all the time. I would like to make a few points regarding that. It is ironic that members of this government, including the Deputy Prime Minister, have called the U.S. administration isolationists and unilateralists. We have heard that again and again in the House, and that is disturbing.

I congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister. In his speech earlier today he in fact reversed that position. The tone of his speech was much different than we have heard from him and from others in the past. That is a start and it may be, I hope, an end to this unfortunate and misguided rhetoric.

• (1325)

Liberals seem to think that multilateralism means letting everyone else decide for us, and that includes the United Nations. On this side of the House, we recognize that true multilateralism means that each nation determines its own position, then they get together to try to find a workable consensus.

Multilateral institutions have been attacked recently but not by the United States. They have been attacked by governments either failing to bring a position to the table, like the Government of Canada on the war in Iraq, or those countries that have refused to try to build any kind of consensus, like the government of France, on the issue of Iraq. That is not multilateralism.

Another value that Canadians hold dearly is humanitarian compassion. To most Canadians, including those of us on this side of the House, the value includes defending people from mass murder and genocide, protecting civil liberties and safeguarding global peace and security, which is exactly what the coalition of over 40 nations is doing now in Iraq, by removing Saddam Hussein and his regime and trying to allow a democracy to be built from that.

Yet the government has refused to join these almost 50 responsible nations in their efforts to ensure the safety of Iraqis from this murderous regime of Saddam Hussein, to defend them against despotism and to prevent Saddam Hussein from destroying stability and security in the Middle East. The government has merely sat on the sidelines hurling some petty and hateful catcalls at those countries that have taken action. Most of those have been thrown and hurled directly against our closest friend and ally, the United States. That is strange because it is our best friend and neighbour, any way we look at it.

Supply

The very same government member who said she hated Americans and called them a name, which was about as unparliamentary as it gets, is also the co-chair of the Canada-Poland parliamentary friendship group. She was also the head of the Canadian delegation to NATO. However even government members, under the encouragement of the official opposition, saw fit to remove her from that position because she was not suitable after making that kind of comment against a very important member of the alliance.

Poland interestingly enough is part of the coalition that is committed to eliminating the oppressive and dangerous regime of Saddam Hussein but government members have not said that they hate the Polish. Nor have they said they hate the British, Australians, Czechs or any of the magnitude of other nations that support the coalition, and nor should they. They save these comments for our closest friend and ally, the United States.

The Liberal tendency to attack U.S. foreign policy at every opportunity seems to be based on insecurity and envy more than anything else. It puts those base and petty emotions above any assessment of Canadian traditional loyalties, Canadian security, Canadian interests and Canadian moral values. When America flexes its muscles the Canadian government feels helpless and ignored.

Canadians do not want the world to think that Canada is helpless to assert itself in the face of America might. They want to prove instead that Canada does not blindly follow U.S. foreign and defence policy. The Liberal way of showing this is to tweak the noses of the Americans and to poke their fingers in the eyes of the Americans whenever the Americans show their strength.

However there is another and far better way to deal with this situation, and that is for the government to choose to lead for a change.

Where has the Canadian government been on this issue of Iraq for the past 12 years? Saddam Hussein defied 17 UN resolutions while the U.S. and Britain used threat of force to keep Hussein back. Where was it when the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia chose to put troops on the border of Iraq to provide a show of force which may well have prevented the war in Iraq. We might have had the situation dealt with without war had Canada and other countries stood together with our allies to deal with the situation. Unfortunately this government and some other governments did not.

• (1330)

As a result, we have a war in Iraq. At the very least we could do something the government has not done. We could show support for our coalition allies who are fighting the war because we are not involved. We could show support for our Canadian troops who are fighting with those allies and at least respect them enough to show support to acknowledge they are involved in this war with our allies in trying to remove Saddam Hussein and his regime from power.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only assume the hon. member across, with his concluding comments, was unable to avail himself of the Deputy Prime Minister's speech this morning. It was excellent and one wherein he itemized very carefully the tremendous support this country had been providing in the war on terrorism.

In quoting him, I also want to recognize with pride the 30-plus Canadian soldiers currently on exchange with the U.K. and U.S. armies, some of whom are known to be deployed in the Iraq theatre right now. We back our conviction that the Canadian ships continue their mission in creating passages of safety in the Arabian Gulf for all who legitimately pass through there, including U.S. ships.

Again and again, the commitment this country has made to its allies, our redeployment in Afghanistan, shows a tremendous ongoing allied relationship between us and the United States and Britain. As has been said so many times, the kind of inference, the kind of remarks that have been a part of the conclusion of the member's speech are so unhelpful. I would caution members to think about those things.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, those words were very well chosen and are completely appropriate. One minister's speech one time in the House quite frankly does not a trend present. We have seen the defence minister deny again and again that Canadians are involved in the war in Iraq. We have seen the Prime Minister deny that. In fact the foreign affairs minister did not acknowledge that today.

By not acknowledging they are there putting their lives on the line for our freedom and security and for the freedom and security of the Iraqi people and people in neighbouring countries who are directly threatened by Saddam Hussein and his regime, we are letting our military personnel down in the worst way imaginable. He did not show that support and the government has not shown that support.

It is shameful if they do not acknowledge that they are putting their lives on the line for a worthy cause. If anything, my language should have been much stronger, not weaker.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's comments and I cannot agree more strongly with what he said. One thing the government has overlooked is the relationship we have had with the United States of America and its people.

I will use an example. People tend to forget in times of need the Americans have come to our aid and we have come to theirs. During forest fire seasons, I know for a fact that we send firefighters across the border to help put out fires. I know for a fact that they send them up here. With regard to the floods, it was the same. With regard to the ice storm, it was the same thing.

In northern Ontario we had the great fire of Vermillion Bay. We were in danger of losing a number of camps there. The camps were owned by people in Ontario, and we could not get enough firefighters. The Americans who were there fishing at that time volunteered and we fought side by side to help stem that fire.

When our friends were in times of need, where was this government? Why was the government not there to respond even on the moral side of it. That is embarrassing. Does the hon. member have any ideas of how we can offset this? How can we send our apologies or make amends on behalf of the Canadian people?

Supply

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, the first thing we should do is support the motion before the House today. It should be supported unanimously and I am sure it will be. At least then we can let the Americans know that every member of the House has agreed to those issues, and that is important.

The member is so correct in pointing out how Americans have come to the aid of Canadians on so many occasions. I have heard members on the other side ask when the Americans ever helped us. I have heard them say that they have never helped us or that they do not care about us. I could remind them through a long list of things but let us start with the floods in Manitoba.

How did we get our military personnel and equipment there to deal with that terrible natural disaster? We had the ice storms in eastern Ontario and Quebec. How did we get our military personnel there to help with that terrible and dangerous situation? We never had the ability to do that on our own. We called our American neighbours. They probably offered their help voluntarily. They provided the heavy airlift that moved our troops and equipment so that we could deal with those natural disasters. Yet we have members across the way asking when did Americans ever help us.

Add that to the list my colleague mentioned. We would find a long list of times when the Americans have helped us. We also would find a long list of times where we fought together in common causes to rid the world of tyranny.

• (1335)

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House is faced with a serious and wide ranging resolution.

Allow me to begin by saying that there is much in this resolution with which we can agree.

Above all, we believe that the relationship between Canada and the United States is strong and comprehensive. We continue to consult closely on a broad range of foreign policy issues. We remain one of the United States' most important allies at home and abroad. We are each other's largest customers and biggest suppliers.

The government has invested carefully in this critical bilateral relationship. We have taken strong action to ensure the prosperity and security of North America. We are committed to continental security in NORAD, to making our border smarter and to improving security within Canada.

We are also partners with the United States in global security. Canada has made significant contributions to the fight against terrorism. We stand together with the U.S. as the western cornerstone of the trans-Atlantic security relationship. Today the Minister of Foreign Affairs is helping to strengthen that relationship in Brussels, where he is meeting his counterparts from all the NATO and EU states.

As we will hear from other members on this side of the House, the ties between our two countries are strong and they are mutually advantageous. They are reinforced by the excellent personal links that we share at all levels and by the many common values that bind our countries together.

This too is the case with respect to Iraq. Although Canada is not participating in military action, we share the goal of Iraq's complete disarmament in accordance with its international obligations. For over a decade the world tried to convince Iraq to live up to the disarmament obligations of the Security Council. Following the end of the gulf war in 1991, seven years of inspection showed beyond any doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime had been developing chemical, biological and nuclear arms and the means to deliver such weapons. The UN concluded that its inspectors had been unable to complete their work prior to their withdrawal from Iraq in 1998.

These are facts, not speculation. The world agreed that Iraq's quest for weapons of mass destruction was real, that it posed a serious threat and that it must end. Throughout this period, Canada consistently called for Iraq's disarmament in accordance with UN resolutions. For this reason, we supported the United Nations Security Council resolution 1441. We called on Iraq to comply fully, without any conditions and with no delay, with the spirit and with the letter of that resolution. Canada offered its full support to the UN and International Atomic Energy Agency inspection teams. We also made it clear that should Iraq fail to comply the Security Council should live up to its responsibilities and determine an appropriate course of action.

Over the course of the winter, Canada made a very serious effort to preserve unity at the United Nations Security Council. We did so despite the fact that we currently are not a member of the council. We were therefore extremely disappointed that the Security Council could not reach consensus on how best to bring about Iraq's disarmament.

We are not indifferent to the outcome of this conflict. We all hope that the U.S. led coalition will achieve a rapid and successful victory with a minimum of casualties. We are deeply concerned about the plight of Iraqi civilians who too often have been used by Iraq's regime for its own purposes.

Our thoughts are also with the servicemen and servicewomen at this time. We share their goal of bringing about Iraq's disarmament, a goal that has been at the very heart of Canada's policy from the very beginning.

Let me conclude this point by noting that while Canada has never made regime change part of our policy toward Iraq, we have no illusions about the nature of the repressive and brutal government of Saddam Hussein. For the past quarter century he has ruled Iraq with an iron fist. He has killed thousands of Iraqi Kurds using chemical weapons, and he has deployed the same banned armaments against Iranian troops. He invaded Kuwait and Iran. He fired missiles against the cities of neighbouring countries, resulting in civilian deaths. We are all aware that these are well documented facts and the government has consistently condemned Iraq's internal brutality and external menace.

Supply

• (1340)

The issue now, though, is how best to alleviate human suffering in Iraq. The Prime Minister has said that Canada will provide humanitarian assistance and participate in Iraq's reconstruction. With our contribution of \$100 million, we will continue this nation's proud tradition of providing humanitarian assistance in times of conflict and times of crisis.

Through CIDA, Canada will do its part to provide war-affected people with access to clean water and proper sanitation, food, shelter and primary health services. We have provided an immediate allocation of \$20 million to assist the UN humanitarian agencies, the Red Crescent society and CARE Canada. This contribution will help provide protection, medical care and material assistance to victims of the conflict within Iraq, assistance to Iraqi refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries, and support for a very important emergency water supply initiative in urban areas in Iraq.

Canada is monitoring the situation very closely. We are in regular contact with our partners and our missions in the region so that we can work quickly and respond to humanitarian needs.

The commitment of \$100 million, which includes a recent investment of \$5.6 million to help UN agencies plan the relief effort, builds on previous Canadian contributions. Since 1990, CIDA has provided over \$40 million in humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of victims of conflict in Iraq.

To conclude, the government's policy is clear. Canada has a strong and vital relationship with the United States. We share the goal of seeing Iraq's disarmament in compliance with its international obligations. We hope for a rapid end to this war with a minimum of casualties on both sides. We call on all parties to this conflict to respect international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions, including the protection of prisoners of war. Finally, Canada, as I have said, is providing humanitarian assistance and we stand ready to support Iraq's reconstruction and its reintegration into the community of nations.

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased have this opportunity to address the House and, perhaps even more important, the people of Canada on this issue.

Frankly, we have heard a lot of rhetoric from all sides of the House. We have heard government backbenchers and others as well as members of the opposition say things that perhaps they regret saying, or perhaps they were said in haste or something of that nature.

I think the comments are inappropriate, by the way, and I make no apologies in that regard in defence of them. This is totally inappropriate at any time, but particularly at a time when issues are so sensitive. It is inappropriate for us to blurt out comments, whether we believe them in our hearts or not. We do not have the same luxury, I am afraid, as the man in the street, to use a colloquial phrase. Someone may feel disdain for someone else, but as members of Parliament we have an obligation and a responsibility to hold our tongues, particularly when we are in public. I regret that this has not happened here and on behalf of my own position I have no difficulty in apologizing to my constituents for the inappropriate remarks.

However, let us be clear about something. This should not be about where Canada stands in its support, its friendship, its long term relationships and its family ties with America. There is absolutely no question about that. One of the editorials in today's *National Post* claims that bigotry against the United States exists in Quebec. That is like throwing gasoline on an open flame. It is irresponsible. We should all stop it, on all sides of the House, and we should say so to the world, not just to the Americans but to our colleagues in Britain.

I am married to a woman from England. I was there recently and sat down and had a talk with my brother-in-law and others. No one is happy about the fact that this war is going on in the desert, that people are dying and that women and children are being shot because of fears of suicide bombers. This war has the potential to escalate into one of the greatest human tragedies of all time. Who can possibly be happy about that?

However, did Canada say to the United States we were not supporting it because we are anti-American? That is absurd. As for the fact that some activities occur at hockey games or on television during national anthems, this is not how foreign diplomatic policy is established and sustained. People are entitled to express their viewpoints; that is why this is such a great country. Canada is an open and free country. Even hockey players will tell us that the fans have the right to boo. It is regrettable, but here is what is really interesting: On one night in the city of Montreal fans booed the American national anthem and on the very next night, in a back to back game, the fans cheered the national anthem. In the city of Toronto when the Maple Leafs were playing, the fans cheered the national anthem. At the Toronto Blue Jays game in the seventh inning stretch, a tape of Celine Dion singing *God Bless America* was played and the fans cheered. Do we hear about that? Do we see reports in the media saying that Canadians support the Americans? No. What we hear about is the negativity. What we hear about are comments blurted out while a microphone was still open.

Then we have the United States ambassador to Canada making speeches. Once again, I find it so anti-ambassadorial to be making speeches to a business group in Toronto or a business group in Montreal and making statements that I would interpret as anti-Canadian in some ways.

I think that everybody needs to chill out and settle down on this issue and stop casting these kinds of aspersions.

Do this government and this country support the United States? Let us ask the people who were in the air on September 11. Let us ask the people who needed a safe harbour, a place to land, a place to stay, and food to eat.

• (1345)

Let us ask them what happened in Halifax and in Newfoundland. They will tell us that they were never more touched and more moved by a group of people, all Canadians, who supported them when they were brought down in a place where they knew no one, where some may not have had much money and where some of them were obviously frightened out of their wits. Their loved ones were at home and unable to be with them at a time when their country was under attack.

Supply

Let me address another point. I hear members opposite saying that the United States would be there for Canada if we were under attack, why are we not there for them? It is an interesting question. The United States is not under attack by Iraq. It is just not happening. This is a pre-emptive strike that we used every diplomatic channel and every effort at the United Nations to avoid happening. It is a pre-emptive strike.

North Korea has the capacity to launch an ICBM missile against North America. Iraq does not. In North America, neither the United States nor Canada, has the capability to defend against an ICBM missile. It is like trying to shoot a bullet with a bullet. I am sure people on the street would be surprised to know that technology does not exist. Does anyone think for one instant that if North Korea were to launch a missile that landed in Alaska that Canada would sit idly by and say that it is not our problem? It is absurd to suggest that.

We have opposition members suggesting that somehow we are betraying our longstanding role. It is very clear that in World War I Canada was at war for two years before the Americans came to the battle. In World War II Canada and Britain were at war for two years defending freedom and liberty before the United States came into the battle. That was its choice. It had the absolute sovereign right and responsibility to decide that as a government. Was it criticized? I do not think so. It was welcomed to the coalition that fought against the Nazis and welcomed as a nation that brought strength and military might.

Why are we hearing all this nonsense that somehow we do not support the Americans? We look introspectively. Every time something is said in this country it is like we are anti-American. It is just not true.

I know some people, including the Leader of the Opposition, went to great lengths after 9/11 to go on Fox news, for example, to tell the people of America that Canada had a porous border, that terrorism was rampant in our country and that there were cells and fundraising, in an effort to downgrade and destroy the reputation of this nation, never mind the government, in an attempt to somehow score political points against the Liberal Party of Canada.

An hon. member: That is shame.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: That is a shame. It is a disgrace. They are actually going out into the world on international television networks and making statements that are just not true.

On September 11, when 19 terrorists flew airplanes into buildings and killed thousands of people, accusations were made by congress and people in the United States that the terrorists came through the Canadian border. Did I hear anyone on that side rise to his or her feet and demand an apology because those people were being anti-Canadian? I did not.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Why deny the truth?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Now the member opposite, the critic for national defence, chirps out "Why deny the truth?" They continue to perpetuate this absolute falsehood, this lie, this blatant anti-Canadian sentiment that permeates every single breath that comes from the opposition members. They are against Canada. If they want to join the United States, let them go. I would have no difficulty with that,

but do not tell me that this country, this immigration system, this defence system and this government had anything whatsoever to do with the tragedy of 9/11. On the contrary, we helped beyond any other country's role.

● (1350)

We have 3,000 soldiers committed to Afghanistan and the war against terrorism. We have three of our ships, one of which is the commanding vessel in the gulf, in the war against terrorism. People here are talking out of both sides of their mouth when they ask: "Should we bring those back? Do you mean we don't support the war on terrorism? We don't support the war in Iraq?"

Clearly, we do not support a pre-emptive strike against any nation in this world. We have taken that stand on principle and we will continue to do so.

I find it shameful that members of the Canadian Alliance, in particular, continue to utter anti-Canadian sentiments in this place and on public networks around the world. They should stop.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member, through his rant, was able to vent some of his frustration. No doubt he has heard a lot of comments back home criticizing him and his government about their poor performance on this issue, in particular, their lack of leadership and anti-American rhetoric that has been widespread through that caucus.

I have sheets of anti-American comments that his colleagues have made in this House and he goes on a rant against us claiming that we are anti-Canadian because we point out the fact that the government has not provided the leadership this country deserves. He says that we are somehow anti-Canadian because we stand with our friends and allies. We do not think we should poke our finger in their eyes and hurt our important relationship—

Mr. Lynn Myers: You tell lies.

Mr. Darrel Stinson: You tell lies. You're the liar.

● (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair takes notice that this is a debate that has been before the House on several occasions and, on each and every one of those occasions, it has raised very strong views and emotions but, by and large, we have been able to conduct ourselves and express our views and our differences of opinion within the spirit of this place.

I would caution and strongly encourage everyone, first, to make their interventions through the Chair and, second, to be very judicious in the selection of their words.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I know there are many others who want to ask questions. I will not let the member across the floor, hurling insults, to slow me down on this.

I want the member to answer for his party. Why has the government shown no leadership in removing Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction, which are a real threat to Canadians and to our country? He stands and supports the Americans, the Brits, the Aussies and the other 40-some countries doing this on our behalf, but his government will not make a commitment on behalf of Canadians.

S. O. 31

To be fair, in his speech he did say that it was wrong for all those members of his caucus to make the anti-American comments, but I want him to explain, and hopefully not with a rant, the total lack of leadership on the part of the government.

The only leadership in this debate has been shown by the Canadian Alliance, quite frankly. We have taken a consistent position, have stuck with it all the way through and more and more Canadians are agreeing with that position as time goes on because it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how anyone can suggest that there is a lack of leadership with the work that was done at the United Nations by our ambassador.

Do those people think that the ambassador to the United Nations was flying solo, that he was not working with the Prime Minister's Office, that he was not working with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence? Of course he was. We were showing the kind of diplomatic leadership, and making headway I might add.

I have heard members opposite say that the time for talk is over. I think they got that from a John Wayne movie. What kind of nonsense is that? This is not "beat 'em up, shoot 'em up" stuff. This is serious business that is costing the lives of Americans, British, Australians and Iraqis who, in many cases, are innocent civilians. That is the position the government has shown leadership on in trying to avoid it.

Should we then turn around and simply say "Well, you would not accept our compromise, our road to peace, our road to some kind of a solution. Tell you what, we will load the guns and go with you".

Every time we will talk before we shoot, which is totally the opposite of that party.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next few weeks will be very important for the residents of Sydney, Cape Breton.

During this time, residents will have an opportunity to have direct input on which remediation option should be used for the cleanup of the Sydney tar ponds and coke oven sites, one of the worst contaminated sites in Canada.

Dedicated community leaders have initiated a three week campaign intended to encourage residents to fill out the workbook, which I myself filled out last week. This workbook will be used to gather the opinions of citizens on what they think are the best options for remediation.

This process involves people having a real say in determining what technologies will be used for the cleanup of this toxic site.

I encourage all residents of Sydney and surrounding communities to participate in filling out this workbook and staying involved in this important community challenge.

* * *

ALBERTA-PACIFIC FOREST INDUSTRIES

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries in my riding for winning a national leadership award from Canada's climate change voluntary challenge at a ceremony here in Ottawa on March 25.

This award recognizes the outstanding efforts of Canadian companies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and this is only their second year in the program. Their tremendous achievement has seen a reduction of 36% in carbon emissions. This is a prime example of what industry is willing to do to meet the challenge of climate change.

Compare that to the government's record since Canada signed the Kyoto agreement six years ago. With this budget, over \$3 billion will have been spent and no plan, just television advertising trying to convince skeptical Canadians that Kyoto is the right choice.

The government has a less than stellar record when meeting its own targets. Where is the government fleet conversion or the federal building retrofit projects? Why is the government not bragging about those programs?

* * *

● (1400)

JUNO AWARDS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the many artists nominated for this year's 32nd Juno Awards being held this weekend in Ottawa-Gatineau.

This year's nominees include such talented, world-renowned artists as Diana Krall, Céline Dion, Nickelback, Ottawa's own Alanis Morissette and newcomer Avril Lavigne who leads this year's pack with six nominations.

Shania Twain is not only hosting and performing at the awards, but has been named in five categories including album of the year, artist of the year and songwriter of the year.

Other multiple award nominees include Our Lady Peace, Blue Rodeo, Sam Roberts, Shawn Desman and Winnipeg's Remy Shand.

The Junos are a chance to recognize and celebrate Canada's talented musicians and the hard work of the Canadian music industry. This year's roster of performers and nominees truly represents an extraordinary array of musical accomplishments from coast to coast to coast.

Members I am sure will want to join me in wishing everyone the best of luck at this year's Juno Awards.

[Translation]

PITA AATAMI

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 28, 2003, was a wonderful day for the Inuit of Nunavik. They have re-elected for the second time and with a strong majority Pita Aatami as the President of the Makivik Corporation.

Mr. Aatami received 1,745 votes, or 64% of the total votes. Annie Popert received 668 votes, or 25% of the total votes, and John Oovout received 254 votes, or 9% of the total votes.

This victory is due to the personality of Mr. Aatami, a hardworking, available, affable man, who has always spoken sincerely in his dealings with the Government of Canada to secure an excellent quality of life for the Inuit of Nunavik.

The Minister of Justice of Canada and Liberal member for Outremont was in Kuujuaq on March 29, 30 and 31, 2003, to congratulate Pita Aatami on his great victory in the election and to meet with him and Johnny Adams, the Chairman of the Kativik Regional Government, to talk about a number of government bills, the economy, infrastructure and social projects, with members of both boards in attendance.

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut as follows:]

Nakurmiimarialuk, Pita Aatami.

* * *

JUNO AWARDS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next Sunday, April 6, the 2003 Juno Awards will be presented here, in Canada's capital.

I am very pleased to acknowledge the active support of a number of agencies within the Canadian Heritage portfolio in connection with the 2003 Juno Awards. I would mention in particular the key role of the National Capital Commission in ensuring that the ceremony take place here, in our region.

The NCC's enthusiasm and excitement spread to the other agencies within the Canadian Heritage portfolio. As a result, the National Gallery of Canada, with its elegant glass structure, will host the Juno Awards opening ceremonies. The National Art Centre will present various concerts over the five days of activities.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization will host events showcasing children's music. As for the National Museum of Science and Technology and the National Archives, they will be organizing displays relating to the Juno Awards.

In addition, there will be concerts and activities at the National Library.

* * *

[English]

PARTHENON MARBLES

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on April 1 the House passed a motion to call upon the United Kingdom to return the Parthenon marbles to Greece, their country of origin, before the 28th Olympiad in Athens, Greece in

S. O. 31

2004. As Canadian Alliance critic for Canadian heritage, I express my support as I share the feelings of compassion, pride and ownership with all Canadians of Greek origin.

It is very unfortunate that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs opposed the motion. I am quite concerned this indicates another fight in the Liberal cabinet between the heritage minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We have a large Greek community here in Canada, a community that has contributed to the greatness of our country. I extend my friendship to all Canadians of Greek descent from coast to coast. I wish to assure them that I stand by their side in their excellent efforts to repatriate the Parthenon marbles to Greece.

The members of the House have spoken. I urge the Prime Minister to relay the content of the motion as passed in the House and not allow the internal cabinet tug of war to interfere. We can only hope the Prime Minister is listening.

* * *

● (1405)

NATIONAL POST EDITORIAL

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning the *National Post* printed an editorial which accused Quebec of being "home to the most virulent America hatred in this country".

I cannot condone any action by anyone who indulges in sterile accusations against our American friends and allies. However, on the basis of such isolated and regrettable incidents, it is defamatory to draw the conclusion that all Quebecers are anti-American. It is defamatory not only to the Quebec people, but to all of us as Canadians.

Being against the decision to go to war has nothing to do with being anti-American. Are the Americans who are against the war anti-American themselves? Are those people protesting on the streets of Washington, New York and other American cities anti-American? Is it a manifestation of hatred against the American people? Absolutely not.

It is unacceptable to contend, as the *National Post* did, that Quebecers are full of hatred toward any people, toward any nation, toward anyone. Such generalizations are divisive, unfair and unacceptable and are totally counterproductive.

* * *

[Translation]

DAFFODIL MONTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month for the Canadian Cancer Society, which works tirelessly to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life of those living with this disease.

From now until April 6, 12,000 volunteers will shower Quebec with these bright yellow spring flowers to mark the official kickoff of Cancer Month in a colourful way.

S. O. 31

Two million daffodils will be available in some 2,600 locations throughout Quebec. The goal is \$1.7 million; this money will go towards funding research projects, providing services to people living with cancer, distributing the latest information on cancer, and covering the costs of public policy advocacy.

This cause still needs continued public support. One out of every three Quebecers will be diagnosed with cancer in his or her lifetime, and statistics confirm that cancer is still the leading cause of premature death.

Over time, the daffodil has become the emblem and symbol of solidarity with those who are fighting this disease. Please remember to buy a daffodil between April 3 and 6.

* * *

[*English*]**JOSEPH KOBOLAK**

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise my constituent, Joseph Kobolak, who received the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Award.

Mr. Kobolak, a former member of the Royal Canadian Army Services Corps, has been an advocate for veterans and has dedicated his time and effort to their well-being for most of his adult life.

An active member of the Royal Canadian Legion since 1948, he has held senior appointments in the legion and has chaired and been a member of many committees.

Mr. Kobolak has also received the legion's Certificate of Merit and its Meritorious Service Medal. His exemplary leadership on behalf of veterans and his contributions to the commemoration of their achievements and sacrifices are testament to his profound commitment to help others.

Congratulations, Joseph, and thank you for your continuing dedication to our veterans.

* * *

IRAQ

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, many people living in North America remember the price they or their loved ones paid for the liberties we enjoy today. Fortunately for all of us, our forefathers defended the principles of democracy, freedom and equality without consideration of political correctness. Our leaders actually led the country rather than waiting to see what the most appropriate reaction should be.

In Canada many of our citizens, especially the younger generation, have never had to fight for the rights we take for granted. As a result of our privileged life, we have lost that perspective.

Our two closest friends and allies are the United States of America and the United Kingdom. We share with them the same principles and ideals. We owe it to them to help defend these ideals throughout the world.

As a result, we the people of Canada ask the Liberal government to pledge this nation's unwavering support to the United States of

America led coalition to liberate Iraq and to help free the world of tyranny and terrorism.

* * *

[*Translation*]**NATIONAL POST EDITORIAL**

Mr. Georges Farrah (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a proud Quebecker and Canadian, I want to express my outrage at an editorial published in the *National Post* today. This editorial suggests that widespread anti-Americanism in Quebec is behind its opposition to anything British or American.

In reality, the people of Quebec have very strong personal, commercial and historic ties with their neighbours to the south. Quebec is very attached to the United States. Just remember how extremely supportive Quebeckers were after the attacks on September 11.

Making such remarks about Quebeckers is unacceptable; they, like all Canadians, are tolerant, open-minded and respectful, and their choices are just as entitled to respect as the Americans'.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the member for Winnipeg Centre. For more than 23 hours the member kept up his fight in the committee to stop the arrogant Liberal government from ramming through Bill C-7, the first nations governance bill.

The bill is bad enough, but preventing opposition parties from doing their job in committee is absolutely disgusting. The only thing stopping this bill from being rushed through committee is the stand being taken by the member for Winnipeg Centre. That is why the Liberals tried to shut him down.

In the wee hours of this morning the committee tried to cut the member off as he took a stand for democracy and first nations.

Although Liberal members tried to stifle the member for Winnipeg Centre, they cannot stop the fact that this bill is fundamentally flawed and that they will be hearing about this for a long time to come.

I hope the member for Nickel Belt lost some sleep last night. He certainly should have after chairing the fiasco to ram the bill through.

On behalf of the NDP caucus and the first nations of Canada, I say congratulations to the member for Winnipeg Centre. Keep up the fight.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

FIRST NATIONS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberals imposed a gag on the future work of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources, in order to prevent opposition members from freely expressing their views on Bill C-7. This bill is liable to create a dramatic and devastating situation, in that it is offensive to the dignity and rights of first nations.

While the government claims to have consulted the first nations before drafting this bill, the majority of witnesses we have heard say the opposite, and see Bill C-7 as an attempt at assimilation akin to the 1969 white paper.

This same government claims that this bill improves the situation of the aboriginal people, whereas in reality it offers no response to any of the serious problems with which they are confronted.

We now know that the Prime Minister, once Minister of Indian Affairs, wants to end his career the way he started it, that is by listening to no one but himself, totally thumbing his nose at the first nations, and realizing his old dream of 1969, that is presiding over the extinction of the rights of the first nations, and their assimilation.

* * *

[*English*]

PETER NYGARD

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 35 years ago, Peter Nygard, the son of Finnish immigrants, started a small clothing company in Winnipeg that has become Canada's largest women's fashion manufacturer, employing thousands of people and with millions of dollars in annual sales. The Nygard label is one of the most recognized in the world.

Peter Nygard was inspired by an idea. The risks he took to make his business grow and prosper are the kinds of values that Canadians know and understand. His achievement was built on a strong entrepreneurial spirit, wise investments and a great deal of hard work.

With headquarters in Canada and offices around the world, Peter Nygard's company is indeed a global empire.

Please join with me in congratulating Peter Nygard for having the vision and the drive to lead his company over 35 years to become a true Canadian triumph. We wish him many more years of growth and much success.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, a headline in the *Ottawa Citizen* says it all: "Liberals withdraw firearms registry bill: Decisions over legal complications could raise cost of program even further".

One week after beating the Liberal caucus into submission and approving another \$59 million for the gun registry, the government is now forced to withdraw Bill C-10A. The government is attempting to avoid further legal and political complications.

Stay tuned, Mr. Speaker. The billion dollar boondoggle is not over yet. One billion dollars, a failed registry and still counting.

* * *

CANADIAN ALLIANCE

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should know about the hypocrisy and political cynicism of the Canadian Alliance and its leader.

I am no longer a member of that party because of my principled outspoken opposition to the costly and discriminatory government schemes of special race based privileges for Indians, forced bilingualism and racist hiring quotas.

By contrast, the Alliance leader has been mailing misinformation throughout Saskatchewan in a desperate attempt to hide his ineffectiveness and his betrayal—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows the rules. He may not use Standing Order 31 statements to attack other hon. members individually, which he appears to be doing. I therefore will move on to the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

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[*Translation*]

LE SALON DU LIVRE DE L'OUTAOUAIS

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 24th Salon du livre de Outaouais was held this past March 26 through 30. This major cultural event enjoys an enviable reputation within the publishing industry.

Close to 31,000 faithful readers attended this year's event. Nearly 600 publishing houses and over 300 authors were showcased to celebrate books of all kinds.

I would like to focus particular attention on the excellent work by the book fair's chairwoman, Estelle Desfossés. The salon is such a popular cultural event because of her energy and enthusiasm. Thanks to the devoted efforts of Mrs. Desfossés and her team of volunteers, the salon is a wonderful celebration of books and of reading.

Congratulations to everyone on the organizing committee and long life to the Salon du livre de l'Outaouais.

* * *

● (1415)

[*English*]

ANTI-WAR PROTESTORS

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have become inured to the odious images of anti-war protestors slurring elected leaders like Tony Blair and George Bush as butchers and Nazis because of their use of force as a last resort to protect international security, while not uttering a word of protest against Saddam's genocidal regime.

Oral Questions

Indeed, a new poll shows that a third of Frenchmen hope that Saddam defeats our allies. Elements of the anti-war left, particularly in Europe, have shown ugly strains of bigotry and anti-Semitism, evidenced by the many recent desecrations of Jewish graves in France.

But now these purveyors of hatred have done the unthinkable. Last week the monument of the Commonwealth war cemetery at Étapes, France was desecrated by anti-war protestors with graffiti that read, "Dig up your dead", "They soil our soil", "Death to the Yankees", and "Saddam will conquer and spill your blood".

Mr. Speaker, 11,000 soldiers lie in that cemetery, including 1,148 Canadians who gave their lives to liberate France. Their sacred memory is disgraced. Shame on those who have done so, and shame on those who have inspired them.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, U.S. military officials have said that Canadian sailors in the gulf region are involved in the search for Iraqi military and government officials. However, the defence minister said yesterday that Canadian sailors are not mandated to intercept, detain or transfer suspected Iraqi officials.

Is the defence minister saying that American officials are lying?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for everything that appears in the media, but the truth of the matter is absolutely clear that we have not detained any Iraqi officials. The mandate of our task force does not include the capture, holding, or transfer of any such officials. Our task force is uniquely mandated to seek out terrorists and to turn those people over to the Americans in accordance with the war on terrorism.

In any case, our ships are miles and miles away from Iraq.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let us ignore for a second the different reports from the ground.

The government's current position is that Saddam's regime is guilty of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. It now says apparently that he should face prosecution.

Is it the government's position that if Canadian naval personnel see Iraqi personnel, Saddam or his henchmen or whomever, they would just wave and let them go?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I just stated as to the mandate of this task force. It does not include the seeking out, detention or transfer of officials of the Iraqi regime. That is because our mandate is to be involved in the war against terrorism.

As I have said many times in the House, the country and the government are absolutely 100% committed to the war against terrorism. That is the mandate of our task force and that is what our navy is assiduously doing at this moment.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer to my question about letting Saddam go is yes.

Let me follow that up. Coalition naval forces in the gulf are on high alert for suicide attacks. We know that Iraqi boats packed with explosives have been intercepted in the gulf.

Does the minister understand that if the Canadian navy does not help intercept Iraqi boats coalition lives could be lost?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is precisely an integral part of the mission of our task force to seek out those who would place mines or in any other way damage allied shipping and merchant ships in the region. Indeed, we have boarded ships suspected of carrying mines and the citizenship of individuals on those ships was of no consequence to our navy.

We are entirely engaged in this matter. Should we find any such mines or other damaging equipment we will deal with it. That is what our navy has been doing and will continue to do.

* * *

• (1420)

MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the former finance minister's company, Canada Steamship Lines, benefited from tax loopholes he helped to create. Those loopholes allow the former finance minister's company to transfer dividends back to Canada completely tax free.

Finance officials urged him to close those loopholes. A special taxation committee recommended shutting them down and the Auditor General said that these tax havens were unfair to other taxpaying Canadians, yet the former finance minister did nothing. He overruled their advice and plowed ahead with the same loopholes.

Why did the former finance minister maintain these tax loopholes when he knew that his shipping company would benefit from them?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am informed that the matter of the tax treatment of international business corporations operating out of Barbados is a matter of tax treaty. A tax treaty exists between Barbados and Canada. There have been discussions between Canada and the government of Barbados with respect to the treatment of the income of international business corporations and the repatriation of that active business income to Canadian firms.

However, at the moment the provisions of the treaty continue to apply and it would not be a matter for us to deal with unilaterally.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in his first budget speech the former finance minister said:

Certain Canadian corporations are not paying an appropriate level of tax. Accordingly, we are taking measures to prevent Canadian-based companies from using foreign affiliates to avoid paying Canadian taxes.

The former finance minister conveniently failed to close the loopholes that help the flags of convenience.

Oral Questions

Will the current finance minister move now to close the tax loopholes used by companies like Canada Steamship Lines from paying their fair share of Canadian taxes?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member could be more precise about what loopholes he believes exist.

My understanding is that the matter respecting the treatment of dividends received out of active business income earned by offshore affiliates is dealt with under tax treaties. These are not changed unilaterally. They do require negotiation and I am sure he would agree with me that he would not take the rather remarkable step of cancelling it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, even the United States has been critical of Canada's inconsistency. Canada says that it is against the war in Iraq, but only in words. In fact, Ambassador Cellucci said that with its ships in the Persian Gulf and its troops attached to foreign units, Canada was providing, and I quote, "more military support to this war in Iraq than most of the—countries that are part of the coalition".

Given this comment, will the minister finally admit that Canada is taking part in the war in Iraq and that in order to be consistent with his statements, he should withdraw from the theatre of operations?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that Canada is making a very significant contribution in the gulf to the war on terrorism. There is a considerable philosophical difference between us and the Bloc Québécois.

The Bloc Québécois is not happy that we are making this contribution, but we, the government and myself, are proud of the fact that Canada is making a very important contribution in the gulf to the war on terrorism, and we are happy the Mr. Cellucci has recognized this contribution.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the greatest philosophical difference is that we are logical and that we tell the truth.

By way of its ambassador, the United States recognizes that Canadian soldiers and ships are helping the U.S. fight a war against Iraq. In fact, the only thing that the United States has not obtained is Canada's official support.

After George Bush's concept of pre-emptive war, has the Prime Minister not invented another new concept, that of unofficial war?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these philosophical differences are not what the member inferred. Rather, for those of us on this side of the House, we view Americans as our best friends and allies. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States in the war against terrorism. That is why we are proud of our significant contribution to the war on terrorism, a contribution that Mr. Cellucci recently recognized, and we are proud of this.

●(1425)

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the American ambassador to Canada thinks that Canada's participation in the war in Iraq—not the war against terrorism but the war in Iraq—is good and even better than most of the 49 countries which support the war.

With such a positive report card from the ambassador, will the Prime Minister admit that his opposition in principle to the war in Iraq, for the purpose of pleasing the public, no longer holds water, since Canada's support for the war is being praised by the United States?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of the war is not a philosophical issue. We have established our principles. We have stuck to our principles at the UN and these principles are still in effect.

The war has already begun and it is now clear that we want the war to be over quickly and that we want the Americans and their allies to be successful.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he can name a single sovereign nation, just one, which is officially against the war in Iraq and which has soldiers directly involved in the conflict on Iraqi soil, as Canada has in Iraq?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that among the ships in the Gulf there are some from France.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister says that the Liberal policy on the war is a matter of principle. I would submit that the Liberals have principles they have not even used yet when it comes to the war. One of them seems to be their alleged principle against cluster bombs. Yesterday the Prime Minister was asked about the use of cluster bombs in the war and he said that we would have liked to have had a treaty against that, but we did not get one, so it is okay to use them.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister of National Defence. Would either one say that if it is okay to have an opinion on the war and it is okay to have an opinion on cluster bombs, what is the opinion of the Government of Canada with respect to the use of cluster bombs?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a misrepresentation of the government's position. The Prime Minister made it very clear yesterday in the House that Canada sought to include cluster bombs in the ban covering landmines. We were unsuccessful in that regard.

However, the Government of Canada does not use cluster bombs at all, so we have our house in order. We sought, we tried hard, but we failed in the end to have that same regulation applied internationally. We have done our best on this issue and we have nothing to apologize for to the NDP.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Well it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, if one thinks something is wrong enough to have a treaty about it, one should think it is wrong when it is used.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. He indicated to an earlier question that the question of the tax treatment of dividends had to do with a tax treaty between Canada and Barbados. I am not sure if that is true, but given that the Minister of Finance is right, can he tell this House today whether he will be seeking to change those tax rules which permit flags of convenience to operate the way they do now in Barbados?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am informed that the matter is on the agenda between Canada and Barbados, and a text is under discussion on the proposed changes to the treaty.

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MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told the House that he had “not been informed” of any potential conflict of interest. The Prime Minister, of course, has a duty to inform himself.

Canada Steamship Lines has admitted that its move to Barbados was because of changes in Canadian tax rules that occurred when the company's owner was minister of finance. The ethics counsellor took part in discussions between the then finance minister and his private company.

Has the Prime Minister now received a full report of those conversations? And can the Prime Minister of Canada now say categorically that the then minister of finance had nothing to do with the decision on which his company acted?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the leader of the Conservative Party that the changes with respect to the treatment of dividends from Liberia resulted from the fact that there was no tax treaty extant with Liberia and therefore it was removed from the list of countries from whom active business income was received by way of tax free dividends. As I have explained, there was a tax treaty in effect in the case of Barbados.

• (1430)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, Justice Parker defined conflict of interest as:

...a situation in which a minister of the Crown has knowledge of a private economic interest that is sufficient to influence the exercise of his or her public duties and responsibilities.

So, knowing alone creates a conflict of interest. The member for LaSalle—Émard acquired such knowledge at least 12 times while he was finance minister.

The Prime Minister endorsed Mr. Justice Parker's definition in the Sinclair Stevens case. Why is there a different standard for the member for LaSalle—Émard?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has established clearly in the House that any minister faced with a conflict of interest must withdraw from the

discussion and he has not been informed that this particular rule has been contravened in any way.

The former minister of finance, as we have stated, followed all the rules established by the previous government, of which the right hon. member was a member. I do not think there is an issue here.

* * *

IRAQ

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this defence minister recently stated that Canadian ships in the gulf are not authorized to intercept, detain or transfer suspected members of the Iraqi regime. Apparently, our sailors can only inform U.S. headquarters that the bad guys went thataway.

We are obviously already involved in the Iraqi conflict. Why will the government not completely commit to our troops and our allies, full steam ahead?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are completely and utterly committed to our troops.

Since obviously many of our troops have put their lives on the line, it is equally obvious that the House should come together united. No matter what our differences are on Iraq in general, we should be united in support of our troops, in thanking our troops for putting their lives on the line, and in wishing them a safe trip home in the not too distant future.

As for our allies, I think I have run out of time, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): He has that right, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, the minister just does not get it: that the war in Iraq is part of that war on terrorism. He claims we are in the gulf for the war on terrorism only, but he has just announced a huge security loophole. Any ship can now get by our naval patrol simply by flying an Iraqi flag. One wonders if they learned about these flags of convenience from the owner of Canada Steamship Lines.

The minister has said that the Canadian navy would protect allied ships from any potential attack, so why patrol the gulf at all if those very ships that pose the greatest danger and threat can just sail on by?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the hon. member is talking utter nonsense. Our job is to patrol the gulf to protect the shipping in the region against terrorist attacks. It matters not a whit whether the terrorist is an Iraqi or a Saudi or even a Canadian. Any individual in a ship who is suspected of doing damage to shipping in the area will be boarded and inspected. Should any danger be there, the navy will take action to prevent that from happening.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cited precedents to not officially support the war in Iraq, a war being waged without the UN's approval.

Oral Questions

How can the government reconcile using precedents to justify not supporting the war and contending that the decision to send soldiers to war was not based on precedents? Why do precedents matter in one instance and not in the other?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have tried to explain earlier today that there are principles, and that some are not necessarily explicit in relation to one another. We have followed a very clear principle before the UN, asking that the Security Council support the war. However, we also have agreements with allied countries. Our troops are committed under commitments with other allies of ours. We can therefore do both.

• (1435)

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could the Deputy Prime Minister explain to this House on what basis he can justify the presence of Canadian soldiers in a war he has described as unjustified? How can he justify the unjustifiable?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our troops are in fact part of a commitment to the armed forces of other countries. That is how our system works. We have done the same thing other times. I think that the principle of meeting our commitments to our allies is totally consistent with the other principles we have followed.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization recommended to Canada that we have a screening interview for potential SARS for airline passengers leaving Canada.

My question is for the health minister. Why did we choose a poster and a card instead? Baggage handlers ask questions very easily about baggage and who packed it. Surely they can ask a question about SARS as well.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before for the screening procedures that we have put in place for outbound passengers at Pearson International Airport, we informed the WHO in relation to those procedures. Those procedures, at this point in time, are satisfactory to the WHO.

We believe that we are taking all reasonable measures to screen outgoing passengers at Pearson, but if in fact after review additional measures are required, we will take those measures. We are reviewing these issues virtually on an hour by hour daily basis.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, airport baggage handlers in Jacksonville, Florida, now have been asked to be very careful with baggage and passengers coming from Canada. I wonder why that would be.

Could it be that we expect other countries to have proper screening efforts? So why do we not have the most effective screening efforts here in Canada? That is the expectation of other countries.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): In fact, Mr. Speaker, working in consultation with the WHO, as I have mentioned before in the House, the screening procedures that we

have put in place are being used as an example by some other countries and other international airports.

Obviously Toronto has been identified as one of the centres of the SARS outbreak and therefore nobody should be surprised that if there are flights leaving from Toronto, where those planes in fact land there might very well be an additional caution noted and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Champlain.

* * *

[Translation]

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as regards the class action suit initiated by seniors against Human Resources Development Canada, we know that the department will now ask the court to refer the case to an administrative tribunal. This will have the effect of eliminating any possibility of a class action suit.

If the federal government is so convinced that it acted properly, why is it doing everything it can to avoid having a court rule immediately on the merits of the case?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me speak generally to the issue of ensuring that the programs that are so important to Canadian seniors are available to them. The government, through my department and other sources, speaks to Canadian seniors in many ways to ensure that they are aware of the programs, whether it be the old age security program, the Canada pension program, or the guaranteed income supplement. We are fully aware of how important these programs are to seniors and we will continue to work for their benefit.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every week, seniors who were deprived of their rights die in poverty without obtaining justice.

Does the minister not feel something for the thousands of seniors who, because of her, will not be able to assert their rights?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I have itemized for this place the numbers of different strategies that we have to ensure that Canadian seniors are aware of the programs that are there to support them in their senior years.

I would remind the hon. member that it is precisely because of these programs that we have been able to reduce poverty among Canadian seniors from a level of over 20% in 1980 to just over 7% in the year 2000.

*Oral Questions***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the immigration minister was finally forced to do the right thing for an elderly woman for whom he had no compassion until her plight appeared on the front page of *The Globe and Mail*. Then he quickly used his ministerial powers on her behalf in order to protect himself from public outrage.

He also could use his ministerial powers, on behalf of Canadians, to protect our country from security risk Ernst Zundel. Why will he not do that?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to drag the case that we settled yesterday through the political arena. I think we acted properly.

As regards the other individual, it is precisely because we complied with the process and wanted to protect Canadian citizens that this person is now behind bars.

[English]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, what the minister actually showed was that he can do the right thing with the stroke of a pen, as he did yesterday for Mrs. Dougherty. He has been given these powers by Canadian law. Why will he not use the stroke of a pen to kick out Ernst Zundel?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in both cases, when we take a final decision it is because we go through a process, so not only do we respect the process, we respect the rule of law. When the time comes to take the proper steps, we will do what is good for the country.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government announced in October 2000 an ambitious policy to revitalize Canada's army reserves. I know that the Brockville Rifles in my riding and neighbouring units like the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment are very interested in the status of this process. Could the Minister of National Defence offer the House an update on the effort to strengthen this important national institution?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is what a pleasant question. I am pleased to say that we have achieved significant success in revitalizing our army reserves, as per the policy announced by my predecessor in 2000. The total number currently stands at 15,500 and it is our plan to increase that by yet another 750 people in the current fiscal year.

With more than 130 units in 125 communities across Canada, there are members of the reserves in the ridings of almost every member of the House of Commons. This is great news for Canada's reserves and clearly demonstrates—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax.

IRAQ

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, reconstruction of Iraq must be carried out not under the U.S. but through the United Nations. Why? Because the U.S. is the aggressor and because the military industrial barons in the U.S. already have their fingers in the till, including companies with Cheney and Perle connections.

Several European nations have said emphatically they will not participate in a Bush-led reconstruction of Iraq. Is that Canada's position as well?

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that we will participate in post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq. No decisions have yet been made on the specifics but Canada will indeed be involved. We have considerable expertise in that regard and we are ready to help in coordination with our international partners, including the United Nations.

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HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, concern about the spread of SARS is certainly growing. Yesterday some 10,000 doctors cancelled their convention in Toronto because of the risk of SARS, which is a real reminder about how the health sector is impacted by this disease.

We know that the Minister of Health and her department have been forthcoming with information and have been working closely with provincial governments. We appreciate her efforts and of course the work of the virology lab in Winnipeg.

Could the health minister assure municipalities and provinces that all necessary assistance will be provided, including emergency funding should that be required?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated before in this House that when provincial health authorities require and ask for assistance, we will be there to provide all necessary and available assistance.

We are working very closely with the Government of Ontario. We now have some dozen epidemiologists who are on the ground in Toronto working with public health officials in Toronto. We have provided equipment to the ministry in Ontario upon request, and we will meet every other reasonable request. If we can meet a request for additional assistance, we will be—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

[Translation]

MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, who is the former Minister of Finance and the future Prime Minister and boss of the current Minister of Finance, would like us to trust him regarding the Canada Steamship Lines Barbados-Canada issue. We are well aware that the decision to protect the tax haven of Barbados greatly benefited his company.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to clarify matters once and for all by demanding the immediate release of the list of all those who were present at all the meetings of the member for LaSalle—Émard with Canada Steamship Lines officials?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of companies are covered by the international treaty between Canada and Barbados. I just explained, during oral question period, that Barbados is a tax haven that exists by virtue of the treatment provided under the treaty. We are not going to change the treaty unilaterally. As I explained to the hon. member's leader, this is an issue that is already being discussed between Canada and Barbados.

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Deputy Prime Minister's references to the Canada-Barbados tax treaty are incomplete.

In February 1994 the supplementary information that accompanied the budget of that year promised to close the now famous loophole for both Liberia and Barbados, but magically, by June 1994, a new clause was added to the draft legislation that excluded Barbados by referring explicitly to the existing tax treaty. That kept the Barbados loophole open.

Why was the draft legislation changed? Was the member for LaSalle—Émard part of that change in—

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party is correct in terms of the changes that occurred, but I am informed that this was as a result of a very large number of submissions that were received after the original regulations were published for discussion. It should be noted that in the case of Liberia, there was not a tax treaty in effect. In response to those submissions, the treatment was affirmed.

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CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will quote the president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, who said about the current state of Canada-U.S. relations that there definitely has been some business loss, that business has gone south because of this. The aerospace sector has also condemned the government's handling of our trade relations and has suggested that we are losing business.

Oral Questions

This affects communities in Ontario that depend on these industries. How can the government tell the auto sector that everything is fine with Canada-U.S. relations when clearly it is not?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Ambassador Cellucci said last week, "Our ties are too deep for anything to hurt this relationship".

If the hon. member is suggesting, as I really hope he is not, that we should make our decisions on matters of war and peace because of how we might make money out of a trade relationship, then I hope he is wrong in saying that.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, of course the minister forgets to quote the rest of that speech which condemns the anti-American remarks of this government.

Perrin Beatty, head of the association of exporters says, "anti-American statements by government officials can have serious consequences for Canada and we urge that they stop".

The head of the Canadian hotel association says that at least two U.S. groups have cancelled major conventions planned for Ontario because of Canadian opposition to the U.S.

How can the government claim that everything is A-OK with our most important bilateral relationship when it has so terribly mismanaged it?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will complete his speech where he said, "We are the envy of countries around the world", that the relationship we have is really the envy of countries around the world. That is the ambassador from the United States.

When we have things like SARS epidemics, I do not think it is surprising that the odd convention might be cancelled. More fundamentally, when members of the House have perhaps misspoken themselves and apologized, who is it that keeps repeating these things over and over again in the hope that they will get picked up in the U.S. media? They do, and it is time they were more responsible.

* * *

• (1450)

[Translation]

DAIRY PRODUCERS

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, contrary to statements made by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, dairy producers expressed their discontent because his inaction caused them to lose \$30 million per year because of imported foreign blends of oil, butter and sugar that get around quotas.

Of course the minister can say that it takes a long time to implement corrective measures, but we have known about this problem for seven years now. What is he waiting for to do something?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I met with the dairy producers at SIAL Montréal in Montreal yesterday and I expressed to them, as I have in the House, that the minister of trade, other ministers and I have been taking a look at this.

The working group has made some recommendations. We are looking at those recommendations at the present time and how we can address this situation. We will inform the dairy industry in the near future of our recommendations.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that he is the one who has the power to solve the problem? What is he waiting for to convince his colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, to beef up tariffs and put the brakes on imports?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that the minister of trade, myself and others have informed them. The dairy industry knows that there are a number of portfolios involved in the decision that needs to take place.

All those ministers involved in that in this government are having those discussions, looking at the recommendations and we will soon be informing the industry of those recommendations.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government can apologize by voting for our motion today. That would sort of be a good start.

The government has promised a review of a Supreme Court decision granting murderers the right to vote in federal elections. The Supreme Court gave that right to murderers even though the victims lost all of their rights. Most decent, law-abiding Canadians were disgusted with that decision. As usual, the government sided with the criminals while ignoring the hurt it caused the loved ones of the murdered victims.

Having promised a review, having done nothing, are Canadians right to assume that the government has no intention of bringing in legislation denying the murderers the right to vote?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the hon. member would have chosen today to raise this issue.

When we had the Canada Elections Act before the committee this morning and when I testified before the committee for almost two hours, nobody even raised the subject that the hon. member is raising now. We can see how deeply serious and sincere they are. This is phoney.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this minister should go to Stratford and tell the people there that murderer Joe Willemsen will

be voting with them if the Prime Minister ever gives him the right to vote in that byelection.

Their democratic right to choose their member of Parliament is being delayed by this Prime Minister. He should tell the people of Stratford that the man they call “the Stratford Slasher” will be voting with them in all elections to come, if he has to serve his sentence of over 10 years.

How does the Prime Minister explain, while the victims rights are taken from them for eternity, their murderers enjoy all of the democratic rights of Canadians no matter how many murders and how many years?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the true motives are now coming out. There is byelection fear across the way, and no wonder, because they will be turfed out on their ear by the Liberal candidate in that constituency very soon.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, geomatics and geoscience are essential tools for providing information about a country's geography, environment and natural resources, including energy, minerals, metals and forests.

A few days ago the Minister of Natural Resources signed an agreement on geoscience with the minister of mines of India. Could the minister tell the House how this agreement will benefit both countries?

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the House that on April 1, I signed an agreement with the hon. Shri Ramesh Bais, minister of mines for India, which will strengthen our cooperation and lead to benefits for science and business in the field of geoscience.

It will help develop a greater collaboration with India and lay the foundation for future projects. The agreement builds on the Government of Canada's commitment to making Canada a world leader in innovation.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that minister does not know much more about that subject than he does about the definition of a statesman.

The director general of the WTO issued a statement saying that it was a great disappointment that negotiators missed the deadline on agriculture. Canada contributed to the breakdown of talks due to its rejection of the Harbinson. In short, Canada sided with the developed countries such as the EU against the developing countries in Africa and South America.

Will the minister explain his rejection of the liberalization of trade in agricultural products and why is he standing with the European Union and not with the developing countries?

Oral Questions

● (1455)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just does not have his facts right on this issue. We did not reject the Harbinson modalities. Some parties in the House were asking us to reject them and we did not.

We continued to promote Canada's interest. We want major, serious reform in the international trade routes for agriculture. We want the elimination of export subsidies. We want a substantial reduction in the production subsidies and the domestic subsidies. That is our agenda and we will pursue it at the WTO.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is just typical of the government. There is lots of talk but very little action and no positive results.

Producers and producer groups across Canada desperately need a successful round of negotiations. The minister has fumbled the ball at the WTO and now with Canada's diminished influence on the world stage, how does the government expect to make Canada relevant again in these trade issues? Just agreeing with France on everything will not cut it.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member has been following very closely the role that Canada has been playing at the WTO, whether it was at the last ministerial in Doha, Qatar, where everyone commended Canada's contribution to the successful launch of a round.

We have been leading since Seattle all efforts that have been made on the implementation working group. We have been contributing to the transparency of the WTO, giving a lot more credibility to the whole trade negotiations around the world. Canada is a leading country.

Last week we tabled our services offer in all transparency. We are active and proud at the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

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[*Translation*]**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board promised us that March 31 was the deadline, that no delays would be accepted in applying the Official Languages Act and that all senior public officials would be required to comply.

How can the President of the Treasury Board justify that the President of Canada Post came and told the committee yesterday that of the five cases that do not comply with the act at Canada Post, two of the individuals would be retiring in the next few years—so he was not doing anything about them—and the other three individuals in question would soon be registering for French courses? Is this the President of the Treasury Board's solution?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois member should know that Canada Post, as a crown corporation, is not subject to the same employer policies as the Treasury Board. I would think that he should be aware of this, given how long he has been a member of

Parliament. Canada Post is required to have its own policies to fulfill its obligations, based on the Official Languages Act.

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[*English*]**PERTH—MIDDLESEX**

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, members of Parliament are elected to represent their constituents. Is the reason that the government is afraid to call a byelection in Perth—Middlesex because it knows the voters will turn the election into a plebiscite on the government's billion dollar gun registry fiasco?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought there was only one member across the way with a morbid fear of Brian Innes, Liberal candidate, soon to be MP for the riding of Perth—Middlesex. However it is now noted that this is a widespread affliction across the way, soon to be cured by the byelection and subsequent victory of the Liberal candidate and future MP.

* * *

[*Translation*]**CHAMBORD PLANT**

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region are about to apply for federal government assistance to purchase the dairy plant in Chambord. They are seeking an endorsement from the federal government to cover part of the acquisition costs.

The Secretary of State in charge of Economic Development made a commitment in this respect at the time of the byelection in Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay. Does he still intend to respond positively to this request and act quickly so that the community can purchase this plant within the allotted timeframe?

● (1500)

Hon. Claude Drouin (Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the outset, we told producers and processors that we would be there for them and that we were prepared to cover the costs of a study. This offer still stands. Our regional office is following this file very closely, and we will be monitoring the situation and applications by promoters. I can assure the House that Canada Economic Development will continue its work in that region, as in every other region of Quebec.

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[*English*]**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Cooperation. The evidence seems to be mounting to suggest that the border infrastructure file has changed hands from the Minister of Industry to the Minister for International Cooperation.

Supply

It has come to our attention that the minister was a participant in a so-called secret meeting in early March with a number of Windsor area councillors to discuss border infrastructure funding.

What role did the minister's office play in facilitating this secret meeting?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the investments that we intend to make in border infrastructure are critical to our trade. We are having discussions with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that the investments we make are the rights ones done in the right way.

That is the commitment of the Minister of Industry. He continues to work on this file, with the widespread support of all members of Parliament on this side, including the member from Windsor.

* * *

TAXATION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister referred specifically to several submissions which led to keeping open the Barbados tax loophole which proved so attractive to Canada Steamship Lines.

Would he table those submissions that he mentioned so specifically and would he indicate to which minister they were addressed?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that we are talking about events that occurred eight years ago.

Certainly if the submissions are in a form that can be made available to him, I have no hesitation in allowing him to have access to them.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would love to ask the government House leader about the business for the rest of this week and next week. I would also ask him when he is going to bring in the legislation so that murderers will not be able to vote in the byelection in Perth—Middlesex that we are so looking forward to because we expect that Marian Meinen—

The Speaker: Order. I was afraid the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast might resurrect question period. This is of course the Thursday question and I know the government House leader will want to resist going off on tangents and will deal with the question of the business of the House.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the continuing fear of Liberal candidate Brian Innes is duly noted, but this afternoon the House will continue with the opposition day motion on the war in Iraq. There are discussions going on with regard to this subject which may continue today and otherwise.

As previously ordered, the House will not be sitting tomorrow.

On Monday, pursuant to what I just stated, we will return to consideration of Bill C-13, the reproductive technologies legislation,

followed by report stage of Bill C-9, the environmental assessment legislation.

I am also looking forward, with the usual cooperation of all hon. members for an appropriate time and hopefully very soon, to resuming the consideration of the Senate amendments to Bill C-10, the Criminal Code amendments.

Thursday of next week, in other words a week from today, shall be an allotted day.

In the event that there are additions or other changes to this business, I shall communicate with other House leaders through the usual channels.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1505)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to continue on with my comments to the government House leader that Marian Meinen, our candidate for Perth—Middlesex, will certainly enjoy the speech I am making. I know she is looking forward to being in the House with all of us and she knows how important this debate is today.

All Canadians have seen the motion that we put before the House and will not understand if there is even one member who votes against this motion because it is such an important part of what is happening in Canada today.

Canadians are understandably confused as to why it should be necessary for the official opposition to endeavour to tell our American friends that the vast majority of Canadians want to remain friends. It worries Canadians that the present Prime Minister, as lame a duck as he is, is still capable of throwing more strain upon our enduring friendship.

Canadians are as bewildered as they are confused. They are wondering why the former finance minister, the member for LaSalle—Émard, is not speaking out against those who hurl insults at our American friends and their administration in Washington. We all know he so desperately wants to be Prime Minister that he will say anything anywhere if it will win him one more delegate vote. He will promise anything to anybody and then hit the dirt when the controversy arises. Canadians wonder why he will not at least speak out on the way his party has turned its back on our American allies. Is becoming leader of that party just too important for him to find the courage to speak out?

Supply

The member for LaSalle—Émard reminds me of a recent cartoon in the *New Yorker* magazine. I believe the caption beneath the cartoon describes perfectly the former finance minister's approach to politics. The caption reads, "It could go badly or it could go well, depending on whether it goes badly or well". It sounds like something the present Prime Minister would say. Does that not capture in a few words the former finance minister? For that matter, would it not be an appropriate caption to stick under a photo of the present Prime Minister?

All of us in this party believe that the reckless statements of certain members of the House have strained our relations with the United States and we regret that. We can assure our friends to the south that the rabidly anti-American New Democratic Party does not speak for or even draw the attention of the majority of Canadians. I think they should know in the United States that the majority of voters in ridings held by Liberals are not rabidly anti-American; it is only their Liberal members of Parliament who are.

I do not think Americans have to be reminded, and the Liberals and New Democrats should remember, that in World War I 35,000 Americans joined the Canadian army. They joined before America entered the war in 1917. Again in World War II approximately 30,000 Americans joined the Canadian Forces before the U.S.A. entered the war. They came voluntarily because they wanted to do what was right. They wanted to fight for freedom against fascism. They wanted to help their good friends and neighbours who were going overseas to fight for democracy and freedom.

No matter how controversial it was and became, there were Canadians who went south to join the American military in the war in Vietnam. And who will ever forget what Canadian diplomats did to help six Americans escape from Iran? Ambassador Kenneth Taylor received the congressional gold medal for that from the president at the time, Ronald Reagan.

We know how the present Prime Minister likes to boast about how he takes no nonsense from the Americans. We just wish he had waited until he was long gone from office. Surely he could have spent his retirement years boasting instead of doing it now in public when some media still listen to what he says.

Here is another question for the member for LaSalle—Émard. The Prime Minister and so many of the member's leadership supporters in caucus believe that the Bush regime is illegitimate. Does he agree or does he disagree? It is time the former finance minister came out of the closet. Is he anti-American like so many of his supporters and the Prime Minister? Or does he agree with us that the Americans are not just our closest neighbours by virtue of our geography, but also our closest friends and allies by virtue of our history?

Mr. Speaker, I should mention that I am splitting my time with my colleague.

One would think that the ancient mariner might find time to let Canadians know what he thinks. If he ever does become prime minister, Canadians might like fair warning so they can develop new investment strategies. They will need those new strategies if the rabid and venomous anti-American rhetoric continues to spew from his supporters.

● (1510)

I think we want him to clear the air so we know that he has at least one opinion on our relations with the United States. Surely it is not too much to ask of a man who wants to be prime minister to have at least one opinion.

Then we have the incredible hulk of the New Democratic Party. He is one who thundered that the American administration is killing babies. We thought that party had decided to give that sort of foolish rhetoric a rest back in the 1960s. Of course, that is a party that never really left the 1960s and most of its members do not know there have been a few new books written since then.

Why are we concerned on this side? We think supporting our allies in a fight against brutal tyrants is the right thing to do, but we are also concerned about the impact that Liberal anti-Americanism will have on Canadians and Canada.

Anecdotal evidence is coming in already. We are hearing of conventions being cancelled or preliminary discussions on conventions being halted. We are hearing of small businesses that do business in the United States getting the cold shoulder from longtime clients and friends.

We hear that hunting and fishing lodges are either getting cancellations or far fewer inquiries from the United States than in previous years.

We hope Canadians will remember it was the Liberals backed by their kissing cousins in the New Democratic Party who did not care what the economic fallout might be. They have vowed they will never join our allies and will continue hurling insults at them.

We hope Canadians employed in the auto manufacturing industry remember it was the Liberals and New Democrats they will have to thank for the disappearance of their jobs.

In my beautiful province, people involved in the softwood lumber industry are already feeling the pain and are wishing the Liberals and the New Democrats would zipper their lips.

Of course there are others, the victims of Saddam Hussein who are trying to understand why Liberals and New Democrats are siding with him instead of those who would run that brutal tyrant out of Iraq.

The business community is wondering why the natural resources minister is still in cabinet after his criticism of President Bush. They are certainly wondering why there has been no apology.

If the Liberals just once in their history would listen to Albertans, and I know that would be difficult for them, they would hear how much the comment of the natural resources minister concerns them. It was totally inappropriate and the Prime Minister knew it and knows it now. His problem is he does not have any other loyalists left to elevate to cabinet. It must be embarrassing for the Prime Minister just as it is for all Canadians. It would embarrass anyone to have to admit that they could not demote a cabinet minister because they did not have the talent or the loyalty in the rest of the caucus to produce a replacement.

Supply

We should also let the parents of the brave sons and daughters who are with the American military in Iraq know that Liberals and New Democrats do not speak for all Canadians. We in the Alliance share the worry and the grief of those American parents and our hearts go out to them. We cannot forget either that there are Canadian parents with children in the American military. Our prayers and thoughts are with them as well.

It is unfortunate that the present Prime Minister and the ones who aspire to replace him all share the same anti-American sentiment. It is not just unfortunate, it is shameful.

We have done our utmost on this side to let our American neighbours know that the anti-Americanism is not as rampant on this side of the border as the government would paint. We want them to know that it is only rampant among Liberal and New Democratic Party members of Parliament.

We apologize for that on behalf of all Canadians who cherish our friendship with the United States. We apologize to them as well that one of those parties has already elected an anti-American leader and that all of the candidates for the leadership of the Liberal Party are anti-American.

We insist that Americans understand one thing and bear it in mind: Canadians are not anti-American. It is only Liberals and New Democrats who are and we hope Canadians will remember that and remedy it in the next election.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments by my colleague, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast. In particular I wish he would highlight a concept.

As the former Speaker of the B.C. legislature, he understands well the difference between disagreeing with people and disagreeing with people in an irresponsible and destructive way. The member from Mississauga called the Americans bastards and the former communications director to the Prime Minister called President Bush a moron. Those kinds of comments are completely irresponsible. Reasonable and honest dissent in a diplomatic and healthy way is certainly appropriate between democratic nations that respect free speech. However that kind of destructive behaviour is completely intolerable.

I wonder if the member could briefly talk about our specific issue in British Columbia, the issue of softwood lumber, and how this is hardly a helping hand.

● (1515)

Mr. John Reynolds: Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with my colleague that the comments made by the assistant to the Prime Minister, comments made by a backbench Liberal, comments made by a Liberal cabinet minister have not helped Canada-U.S. relationships. I think my colleagues on the other side would agree with that also.

Governments can take positions and they may be tough ones but certainly the words that were used by members of the House and the leader of the New Democratic Party to attack Americans are unacceptable. The Americans are our friends. They are our allies. They are our traditional friends who joined with us, as I said, in the first world war and the second world war. Many Canadians joined

them in other wars, whether it was Korea or Vietnam. We have let that slide in the House. That is unfortunate and it is causing problems.

No matter how anyone wants to put it, the members on the other side try to blame us because we are bringing the issue up. Do they expect us to stay silent? We are here to defend freedom of speech certainly, but not careless speech in the House of Commons.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was interested that the hon. member spent most of his speech talking about the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. Even in his speech he questioned whether or not that member had the courage to speak out. I thought it was inappropriate.

Even the motion before us today is calling into question members who make offensive and inappropriate remarks. I think it is inappropriate to question the courage of an hon. member of Parliament.

Indeed the member for LaSalle—Émard did speak out. I would like to quote what the member for LaSalle—Émard said in regard to the Iraqi situation. He said to the media in a public scrum that in these delicate times, Canada should speak with one voice and that is the Prime Minister.

Does the member agree with that statement?

Mr. John Reynolds: Madam Speaker, that Canada should speak with one voice traditionally is a position we would all take, but in this situation the Prime Minister has made a decision that is not good for Canada and is not supported by a majority of Canadians anymore.

If we look at Prime Minister Blair who fought all the odds, at one point 10% of the people supported his position and now a majority support his position because he had the strength to deal with and treat his allies as friends, neighbours and supporters.

The member for LaSalle—Émard is a friend of mine. He is a member of the House. He wants to be prime minister of the country. Canadians have a right to hear him speak in this place to see if he has the same opinion as the Prime Minister and the government of the land. He is not a member of the government inside the cabinet anymore. He is a private member. We have a right to know what he thinks, what he would do if he were prime minister of Canada to cure these sad relations that have been created by the government, the worst we have seen in many years between us and our American neighbours.

We are proud to say that we support President Bush and his troops in Iraq. We are proud to say that we support Tony Blair and his troops in Iraq and all the other coalition partners. We are not trying to hide.

We have troops in that war and the government tries to hide behind technicalities. How many lawyers has it hired to give it the right answers so it is not misleading us about what is going on? We are in the war. We are active in that war. We support those troops. We support those families in this country who are supporting those troops. The government is hiding behind technicalities. It should be ashamed of itself for getting into this position.

Mr. Paul Szabo: You are not answering the question.

Supply

Mr. John Reynolds: I answered the member's question fully. I said I am a friend of the member for LaSalle—Émard. He is a good member of Parliament, but he should get in here and tell us what he thinks.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was concerned when I heard the member stand in his place and say that the leader of the New Democratic Party was expressing anti-American sentiments.

I ask the member to listen to precisely what has been said in the debate today on behalf of our leader and on behalf of our party which is that we are speaking in solidarity with a large number of Americans who absolutely oppose the Bush-led war. I ask the member to listen and if he will not listen to us, then he should consult directly with the many members of the American Congress and Senate who have clearly said that to be anti-war is not to be anti-American.

Can the member not understand that to not support a U.S.-led war in Iraq is a stand for multilateralism and one which the Government of Canada has a perfect right to take? Our concern is that the government tends to speak out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to what it actually does—

• (1520)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the time has run out.

Mr. John Reynolds: Madam Speaker, I respect the hon. member who just asked the question. I respect the things she has done in the House over the years.

However I do not respect her new leader, who is not in the House, who will stand next to somebody who is burning the American flag. That to me is anti-American. That is not good for Canada. It is not good for this Parliament. I do not respect her new leader who would lead parades where people burn American flags and curse President Bush.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do apologize for my enthusiasm to intervene in what is a total misrepresentation of reality. The fact of the matter is—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order. That is a matter for debate and is not a point of order.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I had an opportunity to visit Mexico City with the Prime Minister about a month and a half ago. On the issue of war in Iraq, one of the Mexican deputies had a very interesting perception and I would like to repeat that for the House. He said that on the one hand was the evil of war and that on the other hand was the evil of Saddam Hussein. He said that he anguished with those leaders in the world who had to make a decision on which was the greater evil. This came from a Mexican deputy who is a pacifist.

The army in Mexico cannot by constitution leave the country. The country is pacifist. It was a very interesting insight on difficult decisions made by international leaders.

As a pacifist myself, as someone who treated the results of war in my surgical practice, someone who saw the results that lasted a lifetime, I found myself in the same position, talking about the evils of war and the evils of Saddam Hussein.

The debate today is not actually about whether or not the war is right or wrong. It frankly is about comments that have been made by senior Canadian officials who are anti-American. We are asking for an apology from the Canadian government for those statements. We are asking that in a formal manner.

I have a personal connection to this issue. I have a couple of sons who are currently studying and working in the United States. Paul, a young married man, is studying to become a fireman/paramedic and my other son, who is a bit younger, Peter, is studying to be an airline pilot. They are both in Provo, Utah. I had an occasion to visit them a very short time ago. The one son is going on a mission and I went to be part of a special ceremony. The question they asked me was what was happening back home in Canada. They said that the statements that were being made by senior people were being portrayed as the position that Canada has taken. They said to me, a statement that I have heard more times in the past month or so than I have ever heard in my life, that they were almost embarrassed to say they were Canadians.

I have had more constituents, more e-mails and more phone calls say that they are embarrassed to be Canadians. I believe this is fixable. How have my constituents reacted to the anti-American sentiments? Here I would like to mention Richard and Doreen Wambeke, and Dr. Calvin Booker. I have permission to mention them here in the House today. These are ordinary people; a rancher, a guy who said that he just did not understand how Canada could say that the U.S. has been our strongest and best ally and yet say those things that have been so hurtful.

They asked me what they could do. They set up a website, www.wesupporttheusa.com. A little advertising went around, a few interviews were held and these average Canadians from High River and Okotoks have had, as of today, 205,000 visitors to their website and 102,000 have signed a petition. They ran an \$18,000 ad in *USA Today*, and that ad said, what I think we should be saying in the House, that we support the U.S. in the war in Iraq.

• (1525)

What could the Prime Minister have said so that he could have said that in good conscience and not actually participated in the war in Iraq? I respect the position of the Prime Minister when he says that he thinks we should step aside.

However, here is what he could have said: We support our allies now that they have decided to do what they have to do to stop Saddam Hussein, the tyrant. We do not have enough extra military to send a force but we will be sending some troops to Afghanistan to relieve the marines and let them go to Iraq and we will be in the background with our frigates, with our helicopters and with the AWACS support. That is what he could have said and that is what he should have said but he chose to say that the war was not justified. Having said that, he moved off to say that he thought Saddam Hussein was a tyrant. He was on both sides of the issue.

I came up with some other interesting quotes. Here is one from someone who the Liberals generally love, Justin Trudeau. He said "Canada must stand strong behind its closest friend".

This is what Ernie Eves said:

Supply

I think it is important for our American friends south of the border to know that not all Canadians have taken the position that the Prime Minister and his government have taken. The United States is our long-time ally for many decades. We have the longest undefended border between the two countries in the entire world...I believe we should be there for them when they need us in their time of need.

Now, on the insults. The Prime Minister could have and should have distanced himself publicly from those insults, those hurtful comments. However, because I do not like to repeat insults and give them credence, I will only refer obliquely to probably the worst one that was made by the member for Oakville when she compared the attack on Iraq with the attack on Pearl Harbor, saying that this would have to rewrite history so Pearl Harbor would no longer be described as an atrocity. There is her connection. She connected Pearl Harbor and the events there with a pre-emptive strike in Iraq by the allies.

The Prime Minister did not distance himself from the insults publicly. He says that he did it behind closed doors in his caucus. However here is his opportunity, the opportunity for the members of the Liberal Party opposite and other members in this House, to distance themselves from those insulting comments.

Finally, where is the member for LaSalle—Émard on those insulting comments? His opportunity will be to come into the House on Tuesday next at the close of business for the House of Commons when we will have a vote on whether or not it is acceptable to insult our closest ally.

The Alliance position is that our closest ally should have and could have been supported but that did not take place. This is a choice opportunity for the member for LaSalle—Émard, the current Prime Minister of Canada and every Liberal member of Parliament to stand and say to the Canadian public, "We have been misunderstood. The occasional comment made inappropriately was just that, inappropriate. We apologize, we make amends for and we will not allow, again, statements of that kind".

How will they vote? The Canadian public await that vote Tuesday night at the close of business. I can tell the House that I will be voting for an apology from every individual who made those hurtful comments.

• (1530)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again I am somewhat confused as to why the member is so preoccupied with how one member of the House feels. That is a question that is not before this place, yet it shows that the member is perhaps not as committed to the issues before this place.

I know the member has been a House leader of his party in the past. We have an opposition motion before us, which in fact is four motions. One is with regard to comments made by certain persons. One is with regard to reaffirming that the United States is our closest friend and ally. The third one is to hope that the U.S. coalition is successful in removing the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. The final one is that the Government of Canada assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq. Those are four separate and distinct questions.

I agree with three of them but I have a problem with regard to a position that Canada should support the overthrow of a dictatorship that is stated in this motion. That is not our policy. That is not the UN

policy. For that reason, the government has not supported participation in that coalition.

If the member is sincere about knowing the actual views of all parliamentarians here, on a person by person basis, would he seek the consent of his party to split the motion into four and allow us to vote on each of the distinct elements so that, not only this member but also all members in the House, indeed all Canadians and all Americans will truly understand how we feel about each of these items?

Mr. Grant Hill: Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the member. I have never been the House leader of the party and have never even been close to the House leader of the party. I do sit fairly close to the current House leader and maybe by osmosis I would get his thoughts.

The member, first off, commented about why I would be concerned about the member for LaSalle—Émard. Let me explain very carefully why I am concerned. I look for his comments on hurtful, abusive comments toward our American neighbours. However he has never made a comment that would suggest to me where, why or how he thinks about those comments, which is why I asked that question. He expects and hopes to be prime minister of the country. Would he accept hurtful comments like that?

The member says that he supports 75% of the motion and would like to have each individual clause split out. He did not mention too clearly where he stood on the issue that I spent my time on, the insults, for surely that is the essence of the motion.

I honestly have been able to find something in any motion that I could vote against. The main component of this motion, which Canadians understand, is are hurtful comments acceptable or not. The member will have an opportunity to vote yes or no.

• (1535)

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member who just spoke cited a conversation, which I am sure took place, in Mexico when the Prime Minister made a state visit recently. He and I both were part of that delegation. He suggested that one of the elected Mexican officials said that he could identify with the anguish of world leaders who had to choose between the evils of Saddam Hussein and the evils of war.

I would like some clarification from the hon. member, because I am sure it is not his aim whatsoever to leave a wrong impression. Would the member not agree that in fact this was a false choice, that there was another choice available, which was to continue, through the United Nations, a peaceful process of orderly disarmament of the Iraqi regime?

Second, would he confirm that it was literally a unanimous decision of the members of the Mexican congress and a unanimous decision of the Mexican senate to stand behind the Mexican president in maintaining its opposition to the Iraqi war?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Unfortunately we have run out of time again, but I will permit the hon. member for Macleod to answer, quickly, please.

Mr. Grant Hill: Madam Speaker, it is accurate that the member, in anguishing over this decision, did talk about two evils. The member says that there is another option. The member looked upon the 10 years of diplomatic process through the United Nations as having failed. I actually accept the fact that there is another alternative, a diplomatic effort. If the member thinks that 10 years of diplomatic process is not sufficient to demonstrate whether or not there was, on the tyrant's side, a recommendation that this be followed, sometimes we cannot reason with the tyrant. I wish I had more time. I will leave it there.

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the very distinguished member for Mississauga South.

I wish to speak briefly on the second part of the motion before the House, that regarding the close relationship between Canada and the United States. I do not think there is any doubt in the House that the United States is Canada's most important ally, because while geography has made us neighbours and trade certainly has made us important partners, a history over many years has made our two nations friends.

[*Translation*]

Much of our common history is based on our solid defence relations and our shared goal of international peace and security.

Defence relations between Canada and the United States go back to the beginning of the second world war.

● (1540)

[*English*]

In 1940, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister King signed the Ogdensburg agreement, which acknowledged the indivisible nature of North America's security and pledged mutual assistance in the event of hostilities. The Ogdensburg agreement led to the creation of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which is our highest level bilateral defence forum for discussing matters of North American security. Since its two chairmen report directly to the President of the United States and the Prime Minister, defence issues are discussed at the highest levels in both the military and diplomatic communities.

[*Translation*]

Our defence relations with the United States are based on over 80 treaties, more than 250 statements of understanding and some 145 bilateral forums in which defence issues are debated. Those documents are not mere pieces of paper. They are the basis for our cooperation.

[*English*]

As members know, the most visible aspect of the Canada-U.S. defence relationship is of course the binational North American aerospace defence agreement, NORAD. Since NORAD was created in 1958, we have been working side by side with the Americans to protect the skies over our continent. NORAD still is one of the most dynamic organizations we have. For example, over the past two years it has broadened its focus to respond to the changing threats to North America. In this regard, I can assure members that it will remain a fundamental pillar of Canada-U.S. defence co-operation.

Supply

There are numerous other less visible aspects of the defence relationship such as, for example, our co-operation in testing and evaluating new equipment or in the training of military personnel. In fact, we have access to many U.S. testing facilities that would otherwise be impossible for us to afford. Canadian personnel also train side by side with the American forces. This not only ensures that our two militaries can operate side by side when called upon to do so, but it increases our operational effectiveness.

[*Translation*]

Since September 11, Canada and the United States have been discussing various ways to strengthen and increase cooperation and military assistance in case of terrorist attacks in North America.

[*English*]

Just last December we announced the creation of a binational planning group. This group will conduct surveillance, share intelligence, provide our governments with attack warning and threat assessments, and validate plans for potential maritime, land and civil responses. This group is located within NORAD headquarters and is led by a Canadian, Lieutenant-General Ken Pennie. It is important that in addition to our bilateral defence relationship we will significantly enhance the ability of our countries to work together in case of emergency.

The close defence relationship between Canada and the United States does not express itself only at the institutional level. Our two countries also co-operate in the field. Canadian and American troops operated side by side in Afghanistan as part of the campaign against international terrorism. Just to give an example, the Canadian Forces provided security to U.S. troops in Kandahar and closely worked with American forces to destroy residual Taliban and al-Qaeda forces, and may I say that the Americans were very grateful for the quality of our contribution in Afghanistan. I had the privilege of going to Afghanistan with the Minister of National Defence last summer and heard firsthand from senior American officers in Kandahar about the remarkable work done by the Canadian Forces.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian navy is also the only navy in the world to be able to completely incorporate some of its ships into American maritime groups. Canada and the United States are thus able to carry out joint sea denial operations in the Persian Gulf. U.S. ships are currently part of a multinational naval force under Canadian command.

Lastly, Canadian pilots and surveillance officers are working closely with the Americans taking part in Operation Noble Eagle. That operation was launched following September 11 to protect the airspace over North America.

Supply

• (1545)

[English]

The second part of today's motion asks the House to reaffirm that the United States continues to be Canada's closest friend and ally. I have no hesitation in doing so. The links between our two countries in the fields of defence, in particular, and security are deep, they are strong, and they remain secure.

Canada and the United States have many international objectives in common, objectives such as international peace and stability, democracy, free trade and the rule of law, but as independent countries we sometimes disagree on how to achieve them. And we may well have disagreements in the future. I can assure members of the House that these disagreements will not compromise the very strong relationship our two countries have developed over decades.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, as I listened to the member's speech it really did my heart good to hear a member from the government side recognize that we do have close ties with the Americans, particularly in regard to self-defence and these terrorist times.

I have to remind the member that after September 11 a number of names came to the CSIS organizations and to the government with regard to terrorist activities and fundraising activities here in Canada. The minister at that time said that we did not have that problem in Canada, yet today the government came up with another seven names and now we are up to 26 organizations. The Americans had great concerns about this, as the hon. member must know.

Since our situation with the Americans in regard to the war in Iraq, the member must also know that most of our intelligence here in Canada comes from British and American intelligence. We know that CSIS only performs here in Canada, so we rely upon these different organizations around the world to also supply us with intelligence information. Does it not concern the hon. member that maybe we have been cut off from that information due to our stand and our disagreements with the Americans?

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, I will answer the question very directly. No, it does not concern me at all because we have not been cut off from access to important intelligence from our allies. What does concern me is the continual push from members of the Alliance to have the Solicitor General and the government list groups or entities based on knee-jerk political reaction.

As the Solicitor General has indicated in the House many times, and I think very persuasively, the decision to list entities is based on a careful analysis of criminal intelligence information which we have access to, both Canadian criminal intelligence information and also that of the very effective and very robust relationship between our intelligence community and that of our allies. That process continues.

What I find disturbing is that some members think the listing of groups should be made based on headlines or on rather exaggerated political rhetoric. We base it on intelligence and we have access to the best intelligence in the world.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was really interesting to listen to my colleague speak about the interoperability and the

integration that has taken place between our armed forces, which bespeaks something very important that maybe gets lost in a debate like this. I have made mention of how vital the relationships are between the Deputy Prime Minister and Tom Ridge and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his counterpart, Secretary of State Powell. Those kinds of relationships forge something that all the rhetoric in the world cannot tear apart.

I think my colleague has made mention of the kinds of relationships that get forged when our army and the American army do exercises together in Oromocto, New Brunswick, perhaps, or when we can give them the opportunity for winter training and they can give us the opportunity for summer and therefore desert-like training. This is when regular people like us are working in tight situations, in heavy duty training situations. I wonder if the member thinks that spills into our debate today.

• (1550)

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, I think the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is absolutely correct. The relationship between our two countries is based on decades of co-operation, certainly on economic co-operation, and co-operation in national defence. I have outlined some of the many important areas such as trade co-operation and co-operation in various international organizations and groups. The list is long.

She referred to training exercises that increase the interoperability of our forces, which is something that on this side of the House we are very proud of. I referred briefly to my visit to Afghanistan with the Minister of Defence a year and a half ago. We had a chance to meet with American military leaders. A general commanding the marine group in Kandahar was full of praise for the work our soldiers have done and thanked Canada for our continuing commitment to that operation.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity that the motion brings to the House. It allows members to comment on a wide range of issues, but all somewhat related to the situation in Iraq. I do not think that there is anyone in this place who does not care deeply for the brave military personnel who are there in the defence of democracy and freedom, and in the effort to liberate the Iraqi people so that they can enjoy the same rights and freedoms that we enjoy in Canada and in other countries around the world.

Today's motion is actually four motions on four distinct issues and each of these issues can stand alone. The first item is in regard to comments made by four individuals who were specifically named. Three are parliamentarians and one is a former officer in the government.

All members have an opinion on this and I would think that a large proportion of members, if not unanimously, would express their regret for those statements being made. They were in some cases intemperate and inappropriate. We should all be careful during these delicate times. We are talking about a time when there is a war going on and the horrors of war continue to accumulate day after day. This is not a time for cheap politics or throwaway rhetoric. This is a time for diplomacy, wisdom and responsible commentary on the values that we share collectively with the Iraqi people.

The first issue in the motion is appropriate. There is no question in my mind that that aspect of this compound motion would definitely pass in this place.

The second aspect deals with reaffirming our mutual respect and friendship with the United States. Again, there is no disagreement in this place, within the government, the other parties or within Canada. That part of this compound motion would pass.

The third item deals with a hope that the U.S.-led coalition be successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime of power. This has been a matter of serious debate not only in this place, but initially as part of UN resolution 1441 which was about whether or not there was authorization for war, and whether there was UN Security Council authorization for removing a dictator. Does that not set a precedent that free countries could go and begin to eliminate all dictators around the world? It is a very slippery slope.

Our policy has a history to it. It has a foundation and a basis that is clear and has been established over a long period of time. For that reason, we are not specifically participating in a conflict which is there ostensibly to remove a dictatorial regime. I am not sure how a vote on this part of the motion would come out. Everybody would say that they wished there was no war, that they wished there was a diplomatic and peaceful solution to these matters, but a vote in this place with regard to the conflict and participation in the conflict, or our support in principle for what is happening, would be more problematic. Members would want to consider carefully their positions, each and every one, and I am not sure of the outcome of that vote.

The final item is that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq. It is unnecessary to include that in the motion. Canada has already contributed \$100 million to the Iraqi relief effort for the innocent people of Iraq who are in harm's way due to the conflict.

• (1555)

We have four motions. One is self-evident and the results on two motions are obvious on face value. Then we get down to the one which is the principal issue. The principal issue is that the Government of Canada has taken a stand on this based on its longstanding foreign policy and its support for the United Nations and the Security Council positions.

Given that that is the case, I would assume all hon. members would want to be absolutely sure that their views on each and every one of these items was clear and unequivocal, and that they would be prepared to stand in their place on these matters to ensure that there was no confusion. I am sure that members on all sides of the House would want to ensure that not only would each member have the

Supply

opportunity to express their views on each and every one of these items, but that the result of their position was clearly known to their constituents, to other members in this place, to all Canadians, and indeed to our American colleagues.

If it is the will of the House for members to express themselves in good faith on these four diverse questions, we have a challenge before us now. It is important that we not obfuscate the issues in a way in which I believe they are moving.

It is dangerous to proceed with a motion which, if, for instance, the House were to vote on and say yes, would then be an opportunity for some to say, for cheap political opportunism, that the member voted yes to the motion but no to the war. We would have to go to war and that would be a contradiction.

If members were to vote no, saying that they do not support the motion, then some who want to make political hay out of it would say that we do not mind people saying those intemperate things about Americans and about the President of the United States. This is not a win-win situation.

In the tradition of this place where all hon. members would want to ensure that there is true, full and plain communication to all members, Canadians, and Americans, in fact, all interested parties, I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to split the motion into its four component parts.

• (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that the movers of the motion did not support it. I alert the House, Canadians, and our friends in America that the results of the vote will not be clear simply because the question is compound and not clear.

As a member from the wonderful city of Mississauga I am a neighbour to one of the ridings the member of which is party to one of the areas in which the House is expressing concern. It means that I have received an inordinate amount of communication on this. I want to be very clear to my constituents and to those people who have expressed concern about commentary that was made by a particular member. I disassociate myself with the remarks of that member. They were inappropriate and incorrect. I unequivocally apologize that those remarks were made.

Many of my constituents, corporations, economic interests, and the Mississauga Board of Trade, to whom I spoke two Fridays ago, expressed their concerns to me. I share their real legitimate concerns that economic impacts are possible. They are possible if there is this ongoing appearance of remarks which would be characterized as anti-American.

I wish to assure them that on this side we will continue to work as hard as we can to ensure the free flow of trade between Canada and the U.S. and to continue to build our wonderful friendship with the United States.

Supply

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member from the other side and understand that he has some reservations regarding part of the motion that says:

...hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power;

I want the hon. member to understand that no one wanted to see a war take place, but we must admit that it has happened. All we are saying is that it has happened, we are not going to stop it, so at least we should support our allies in that regard. Does the member understand what I am saying?

Yet, the member still says that he has a problem with that part of the motion. I cannot disagree more strongly with the member on the argument that he put forward about his concerns. The conflict has started. There is nothing the hon. member can do. There is nothing this side of the House can do. There is nothing we can do to stop it. We should now at least show support and hope that our allies are successful in achieving their goal.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard is an important member of this place. He has done a tremendous service to his country in representing his riding as a member of cabinet and finance minister. His position is of great interest to many people. The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, in response to the very question that the member just asked, said clearly that in these delicate matters Canada must speak with one voice, and that is the Prime Minister.

The question that the member asked is, now that the war is going on, why do we not just participate? Let me quote—

Mr. Darrel Stinson: What about support?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Or support. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister said this morning that Canada was not directly engaged in this conflict because we stood apart and believed that it was the Security Council of the United Nations that ought to have taken the responsibility for authorizing the use of force in international conflict. He added that this was consistent with decades of Canadian foreign policy and it was consistent with the charter of the United Nations. He concluded by saying that it was consistent with past practice, as long ago as the Korean war and as recent as the first Gulf war.

The government speaks with one voice, it is that of the Prime Minister and leader of the Government of Canada.

• (1605)

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the member stated that economic consequences are possible. First, that is not a reason to support or not to support. If we are going to support our troops we must do it for a principled reason. I want to correct the member when he said that economic consequences are possible. They are not only possible and probable; they are happening now. He needs to face the music on that one.

My second point relates to what the members said about wanting to disassociate himself from the member who made some pretty outrageous comments. Silence is consent. When we see an apology, and then joke about it on the Mike Bullard show; when we see the leader not even responding or dealing with these kind of comments;

his silence is consent. It means that he accepts those comments. I would like the member to think about that.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Madam Speaker, I have responded clearly and concisely on the member's point.

I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting Canada's Nobel peace prize winner, the right hon. Lester B. Pearson, who said: "Our principle of the relationship with the United States is that we should exhibit a sympathetic understanding of the heavy burden of international responsibility born by the United States, not of our own imperial choosing but caused by part in an unavoidable withdrawal of other states from certain of these responsibilities".

The United States is the most powerful country in the world and countries all around the world look to it for leadership. They respect the role and heavy burden it has. Our relationship with the most powerful country in the world is strong. We are united and our trade continues to grow, and it will continue to grow.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the opposition motion put forward by the Canadian Alliance which I would like to cite once again into the record because it speaks clearly for itself. The motion reads:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

I cannot conceive any reasonable member of this place opposing any one of the five propositions in this motion. I understand that for reasons, both good and bad, well and poorly informed members on all sides may have different views about the means by which the world has arrived at war in Iraq today. I can understand that many here may continue to have objections to the use of judicious military force by the coalition countries to enforce international security and implement 17 UN Security Council resolutions. I further understand those who may be motivated by pacifist sentiments or who effectively never see the moral or political circumstances under which the use of military force can be justified.

However the motion does not seek an endorsement of the war per say. It does five things very simply.

First, it expresses our regret and apologizes for inappropriate remarks made in this place and by members of this place regarding our closest friend and best ally. This ought not to be a contentious matter.

Second, it reaffirms our friendship and alliance with the United States which has existed since the end of the war of 1812.

Supply

Third, it hopes that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful and that Saddam's regime is removed from power. Surely there is not a single member of this place who would say that he or she hopes that Saddam Hussein is not removed from power at this point. If there are members in this place who hope that the coalition is unsuccessful and is militarily defeated in Iraq and the butcher of Baghdad remains in power to terrorize his people and threaten world peace, let them say so today in this debate. This is their opportunity to do so. I am certain, but I do stand to be contradicted, that there would be no such sentiment expressed in a responsible, democratic chamber such as this.

Fifth, the motion also urges the Government of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq led by the coalition forces that are already doing so in the provision of humanitarian aid.

Already in the debate today, many members have rehearsed and discussed the stream of remarks made by members here and others associated with the government which have undermined our historic relationship with the United States. Unfortunately, those remarks were not limited to members of the House or indeed senators, but other members of the government. We know about the unfortunate remarks made by the former director of communications of the Prime Minister, the remarks of the member for Mississauga Centre, the member from Burnaby, who is now the Minister of Natural Resources, and many others of their ilk.

We also know that these unfortunate, undiplomatic and sometimes hateful remarks have been taken note of by many of our friends in the United States. We know that this has eroded this country's political capital in the United States which is essential to maintaining our national interests in what is the world's largest bilateral trading relationship in history, a relationship which entails over \$1 million of goods and services exchanged every minute of every day.

What we have not heard is an adequate disavowal of these remarks and the sentiment which they betray by the top leadership of the government. We have not to this day heard the Prime Minister condemn or demand a retraction of the words by the Minister of Natural Resources for attacking the President of the United States. We have not yet heard the Prime Minister explicitly rebuke his member from Mississauga and other of his colleagues for these sorts of statements. This is a good faith opportunity for all members from all parties to go on the record to express their view that these kinds of sentiments are unacceptable.

• (1610)

When political leaders with the platform that they have, the bully pulpit, the perceived authority which they hold, make statements of this nature, it colours and poisons the public debate. Need we look any further than France whose leaders have engaged in an orgy of anti-American posturing over the past several weeks? Is there any doubt that there is a correlation between the position and the sentiments expressed by political figures in France and the nasty, hateful manifestations of bigotry in the streets of France?

Is there any doubt that were it not for the kind of toleration given anti-American sentiments by political leaders in that country, that we would have arrived at a situation where an anti-war protester, as they call themselves, in this case a purveyor of hatred, would walk into a Commonwealth war cemetery last week wherein lie the remains of

1,100 brave Canadians who died for the liberation of France and spray paint on the memorial there "death to the Yankees, Saddam will conquer you and spill your blood" and similar odious sentiments expressed.

Every day in these protests on this Hill and elsewhere, where the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom are referred to as butchers, baby killers and Nazis, there is a continuum between the kind of sentiments expressed by political leaders here and the odious bigotry expressed by those who parrot their sentiments on the street. That is why we must put an end to this. The Prime Minister claims he has done so in his caucus. Clearly it has not been effective and for that reason we must do so collectively as a House.

Let me emphasize in my closing couple of minutes my hope that the government will, in particular, support the third provision in this motion, that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam's regime from power.

The formal position of the Prime Minister to date has been that he is against regime change. Apparently that is still his position. This is a bizarre contradiction. On the one hand, he claims that he respects the right of the United States to enter into this conflict. He has said earlier that resolution 1441 and the precedent resolutions to it, including 687 and 678, are ample legal grounds upon which to base the use of force to disarm Iraq in which the removal of the regime is a necessary precursor. Now he opposes that as far as Canada is concerned.

His Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that Canada hopes the allies are successful and that Saddam is removed. Then the next day the Prime Minister contradicts him and the foreign affairs minister flip-flops. Two days later in this place, the government finally gave consent to a motion that I have had on the floor for several years to recognize that Saddam and his regime were guilty of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide and that they ought to be brought to justice through an appropriately formed international tribunal.

If all that is the case, how can the government possibly take the position that Saddam and his thugs are responsible for genocide and crimes against humanity but ought at the same time to stay in power to continue prosecuting acts of genocide and crimes against humanity? That would appear to be the formal position of the government.

In the motion today the opposition has given the government an opportunity to clarify its position and to express our solidarity with our allies. While we may not formally be engaged in the war in a military sense, although that is itself debatable, we at least in the opposition believe that this tyrant, who is responsible for the deaths of over a million people, should be removed from power and to do so is both just, legal and morally obligatory on responsible democracies.

Supply

•(1615)

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has referred to the third part of the motion, which I will quote, “hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power”. He has indicated that it would be a bizarre contradiction for the government not to support this motion inasmuch as we are all opposed to dictatorship and we are opposed to the despotic regime that Saddam Hussein leads.

Could the member though look at this in a little different way? Our opposition with respect to the attack against Iraq is within the context of our belief that there should have been a United Nations multilateral force that would have done the job for the reasons that the opposition has given: the removal of a dictatorial and despotic regime, in fact the liberation of Iraq. Does he not see a problem with that kind of logic?

If we applied the same kind of logic, that it is a bizarre contradiction to support the attack but outside of the UN, I ask him this question. Not too long ago we were on the cusp of a conflict between Pakistan and India, both nuclear powers. At this time there is a problem with respect to the nuclear capability of North Korea which needs to be resolved. We have seen the Chechnyan situation with respect to Russia, and Russia's desire to deal with those problems. We have seen the deterioration of relations around the whole support of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Could the member respond to the government's position that these are the kinds of issues that cannot be addressed through pre-emptive action because in fact pre-emptive actions will lead to major confrontations and could lead to nuclear war if there is no United Nations policy, which is the policy of the government and has been driving this position?

•(1620)

Mr. Jason Kenney: Madam Speaker, I could restate the member's question and the government's position by quoting from an article by Andrew Coyne this week in the *National Post* where he says:

[The government's position is] as clear as day. Regime change is not authorized by the United Nations. We do not support regime change in Iraq: After all, if we're going to go knocking off every genocidal dictator with a taste for weapons of mass destruction who has invaded two of his neighbours and defied 17 UN resolutions over a dozen years since a ceasefire that was never honoured in a previous war duly authorized by the Security Council, well, where do you stop?

That is the position of the government, that this would be a dangerous precedent. I do think these are all different situations strategically, legally, and politically. We cannot apply the same remedies in every instance. Yes, there are other rogue regimes which are in danger of becoming proliferators of weapons of mass destruction but none of them to my knowledge are guilty of having demonstrated hostility by invading their neighbours. None of them to my knowledge actually have used weapons of mass destruction on their own citizens in a mass context or on their neighbours. None of them are guilty of violating 17 UN Security Council resolutions. None of them are in violation of a solemn ceasefire obligation to disarm and destroy the weapons of mass destruction within 15 days of the conclusion of hostilities in a war authorized by the United Nations. Further, none of them, not even North Korea as nasty as

that Stalinist dictatorship is, are guilty of nearly as many abuses of human rights and acts of genocide as that in Iraq.

Finally, while that is the case, Iraq is a separate and particular situation. I believe the use of preventive force ought to have an extraordinarily high threshold and I believe Iraq meets that threshold. I believe that the just and legal use of force there will be a cautionary lesson to other rogue regimes that would be tempted to violate the will of the international community not to develop weapons and programs of this nature and to proliferate. This is an important precedent and a high threshold which the situation in Iraq clearly has met.

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to speak in favour of this motion which calls on Parliament to fundamentally express itself in a morally responsible way. Our motion is made up of four parts: it is an apology; it is an affirmation; it is an expression of solidarity; and it is a commitment to a better future.

Let me begin with the apology, specifically an apology to the United States of America for the comments made by some Liberal members. Liberal insiders and politicians have referred to the Americans as “morons” and “bastards”. The Minister of Natural Resources recently indicated that President Bush was “not a statesman”. There are many other examples. Not one of these individuals has been rebuked by the Prime Minister.

I am sickened and personally offended that a member of this House would have the gall to refer to our closest friends and allies as bastards. My wife is an American. Those comments are insulting and improper. One member asked why we would repeat it. It is because silence is consent and the only apology we have seen is a mockery, a joke made on the Mike Bullard show. That is why we are repeating it, because we have not seen a sincere apology and until we do it is important that Canadians know how Liberals feel.

I will not spend any more time on this issue. Frankly, if the members opposite cannot see the insult they are causing south of the border, I am surely not going to make them see it in the next 10 minutes.

I applaud the few members who have had the courage to defy this vindictiveness and have shown our American friends that most Canadians care for their welfare and value their friendship. Their comments are a welcome attempt to prevent any further damage to the relationship between our countries.

The second part of the motion is the affirmation. It is more than an apology, it is an affirmation that Canada and the United States are not only friends but also allies in peace and war. It is easy to be friends in times of peace.

I note the government has introduced a counter motion. It includes pleasant words regarding our friends to the south. Given its actions however, I suggest they are empty words. True friends are there when things are darkest.

An expression of solidarity is more than an affirmation of that friendship, it is an expression of solidarity. It shows a willingness to stand beside our allies in support of the liberation of Iraq. May their victory be swift and with minimum casualties on all sides.

I believe in peace. I stood in this place on February 6 and said as much. I made an appeal to justice and to due process. I called for leadership from the government. I stated that we needed to demonstrate that our western allies support the rule of law. I also said that we need to send Saddam Hussein a strong message that we are willing to defend these principles when dictators like him attempt to flaunt them. We have not.

I listened earlier to the Deputy Prime Minister talk about the need for international consensus. Well, there are 40 countries in the coalition of the willing, including Australia, Spain, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands. There is an international consensus. It is a consensus despite the competing national interests that have recently frozen the debate at the United Nations.

What about the United Nations? The Deputy Prime Minister called on multilateral agencies to be strong and proactive. Well, the United Nations Security Council has cited the Iraqi regime for over 30 violations of the 1991 ceasefire agreement. The United Nations passed resolution 1441 which clearly stated that Iraq must completely comply with its previous ceasefire commitments or face serious consequences.

The problem with the government is it thinks it can make an expression of solidarity without making any commitments.

• (1625)

Like many Canadians, I have given this issue considerable thought. It is not pleasant to go to war, but I support bringing democracy to the people of Iraq. I support removing the threat to regional and world stability that Hussein represents. If the government supported this, it would do something about it. If it supports the efforts of the coalition, it should stand up and say so. If it does not support the war in Iraq, then stand up and say that. It cannot say both.

Finally, on this side of the House we are committed to making Iraq a better place for its people. More important, we are committed to making Iraq a place where its people can choose their own government without fear of torture or persecution. When this war is over, the commitment in Iraq will not be over. Our motion recognizes this fact and calls for the government to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

At the end of the second world war, the allies did not take joy in the destruction of their fallen opponents. Instead, from 1945 to 1953 the United States pumped \$13 billion into western Europe, including Germany and Italy. Japan was also rebuilt with a functioning democracy that exists to this day.

As a result, our opponents in 1945 are now democracies and friends. Those who say that peace can never come from conflict would do well to remember the example we were taught in the second world war.

If we are to have any lasting impact in Iraq, we need to employ the same value system. Canada can assist by providing political and economic assistance in the rebuilding of Iraq. Despite years of degradation under the rule of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi people have much in their favour. They have a strong history, educational system and resources that will allow them the wealth they need to be a

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prosperous and dynamic participant in the world community. We need to welcome them into that community.

What was impossible under Saddam's regime will be possible when he is gone. We can prove to the Middle East that our motives are sincere by empowering the Iraqi people themselves and by helping them build an infrastructure that will allow them to grow into a functioning and pluralistic democracy.

Twenty years from now we should be able to say that we prevented a new generation of terrorists and instead discovered a new generation of friends. Will it be easy? Certainly not. There are entrenched interests in Iraq that will not so willingly give up their special privileges.

For Canada to be a useful participant in this process, we will have to rediscover some of the Canadian spirit we have lost since 1945. This spirit led coalitions of the willing in 1914, in 1939, in 1950 and again in 1991. It did not hide behind the skirts of countries like Guinea, Syria and Angola. To rebuild a nation, one needs to have a vision of what is good in a nation. This means recognizing that the United States and Syria are not moral equals.

Our motion today is about recognizing this fact and moving forward so Canada can be a positive force in the world. We can regain some of the direction we have lost in our country under the present administration's persistent quest for a legacy of irrelevance.

For the people of Canada, Iraq and the world, I hope all members will do the right thing and put principle first.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate. I will share my time with my hon. colleague from Mount-Royal.

We live in a time where the world has really become a global village. As a member state of the United Nations, with a sterling international reputation, it is in our interest to do everything we can to restore the credibility of the United Nations and its Security Council.

Therefore, when we have to consider proposals like the one before the House today, which is a general proposal with some positive aspects and some not so positive aspects, we wonder if the opposition is not hoping for the worst. I do not want to be partisan but I have to say that the wisest statement I have heard in the last few days came from our Prime Minister.

On March 26, a week ago, he said, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, when we listen to the opposition members, they seem to have a desire that there be bad relations between us and the United States. They desire that.

Yesterday, the ambassador said that the relations between Canada and the United States were so important for both of us that we had to keep the relations we have had, even if we have a disagreement. It is not the first time, but this country, in a situation like that, has the right to make the decision we made, like they have the right to make the decision they made. Among friends, sometimes we can disagree.

Supply

When we look at what some opposition members are doing, not all of them, but some of them, we have to wonder if the ultimate goal is not to sour our relations. We have an extremely constructive relationship with the United States: \$1.2 billion in trade every day and two million jobs created on both sides of the border.

Canadians are not asking Americans for charity. We have an extremely constructive trade relationship because of the proximity of our borders, because of the common interests that we pursue and because of the economic niches that we have developed respectively and that complement the economic structure of both our great countries. I believe that we have a common interest in maintaining these extremely constructive trade relations.

I think that Canada's role is not always to rush to agree with its neighbours' version. At a time when international challenges are increasingly important, when the gap between the rich and the poor is growing ever wider, a fact made increasingly visible by the media, Canada's role, a role of which I am proud, is to restore the credibility of an organization called the United Nations. We cannot continue to play around with the United Nations when it suits us and let them down when it does not.

Tonight, 800 million people are in dire straits; 9,000 children are dying of hunger every day. Canada has taken on the role of ensuring that international organizations such as the United Nations can help all countries of good will in the world meet this huge challenge.

I believe that the next war that must be fought is the war against poverty. My dream is to one day see all donor countries in the world working together to feed all the young children struggling to survive. This is the goal that we must pursue.

• (1635)

Canada has said from the outset, through the voice of its Prime Minister, that it would get involved, but under the umbrella of the United Nations. The UN is an international moral guarantor that, in our opinion, can absolutely not be ignored. The United Nations will increasingly be called on to play a major role, not only to wage war, but also to face huge challenges, including that of famine.

One billion human beings do not have enough to survive. This is a major challenge. The Prime Minister told us that UN agencies are important. The World Food Programme, Care Canada and UNICEF are organizations that our country must support. Currently, we are not directly involved in the war. But we are already taking action. Indeed, while the war is raging in Iraq, we are involved in a number of programs.

What saddens us is that over a period of 20 years a country like Iraq has experienced three wars. This is incredibly devastating.

I am proud of the initiative that is being taken and of the actions that we have begun in cooperation with the United Nations. We are relying on UN agencies to try to make the military operation somewhat less painful.

This is nothing new. Our involvement in Iraq goes back to 1990. It goes back 12 years. Through CIDA, we have provided to Iraqis in need, to displaced persons and to Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries, about \$35 million in humanitarian aid. This aid is in the form of food, medical supplies, landmine awareness programs and

initiatives conducted through UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs.

Recently, Canada supported the preparations for delivering humanitarian aid to Iraq by providing \$5.6 million. In response to the call put out by the UN, these funds were allocated to a number of organizations to support their work. The UN is not a clandestine organization. It represents us all. Therefore, we must use it and do everything to further develop it.

The UN High Commission for Refugees received \$2.9 million to organize non-food aid and to prepare refugee camps so as to help these people and those who seek asylum in neighbouring countries.

UNICEF, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, received \$1.6 million to provide medical supplies, water and sanitary facilities in Iraq and in neighbouring countries.

We have put \$1 million into the World Food Program—which enjoys great international recognition and with which Canada has daily contact in order to help the most disadvantaged—in order to deliver food aid to the neighbouring countries and to help establish joint logistical and communications systems for the United Nations.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also received assistance from CIDA. We recently announced \$100 million in direct aid to Iraq. A portion of this was reserved for UN organizations in order to respond to the urgent appeal issued last Friday.

This contribution is a manifestation of our commitment to the most disadvantaged inhabitants of this planet, particularly with a view to enhancing the credibility of the United Nations still further. The first installment of \$20 million is in response to the UN's appeal of last Friday, as well as to provide support for the activities of the Red Cross and Care Canada.

I believe Canada has taken on the role of a builder of peace. There is a very close connection between the war against poverty, in which Canada is actively involved, and the war against international terrorism, to which we are strongly committed along with our allies.

I am pleased to again express my pride in the role Canada plays internationally in continuing to enhance its constructive position in favour of peace and in favour of the most destitute inhabitants of this planet.

• (1640)

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my hon. colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his speech. I heard him say, citing a previous remark, that opposition members would make it their pleasure and duty to worsen relations between Canada and the United States.

I respectfully submit to the attention of this House that it was not opposition members who made rather derogatory remarks, to say the least, about our American allies. It was not opposition members who made flatly insulting remarks about our American allies. Those remarks were made by Liberal members and even a minister of the Liberal government.

I think that the government does not need any help from the opposition to make relations between Canada and the United States worse. It was not the opposition parties that announced—without informing the Americans—that Canada would not be participating in the coalition. It was the Prime Minister himself who made that announcement, without warning the Americans.

Not that I question or that I am not happy with the decision of the Prime Minister to inform the House before he informed our American allies, quite the opposite, but I do believe that, because of the very confusing messages Canada was sending the world as to whether it would or would not join the coalition, whether or not a resolution was passed by the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. was not expecting such an about-face by Canada on the day the Prime Minister announced in this House that Canada would not take part in the operations of the coalition.

Does my hon. colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord not recognize that relations between Canada and the United States are deteriorating because of all this bungling by government members and that they keep deteriorating because the government's position on our participation in the coalition's operations continues, even today, to be confusing?

The United States expect much more clarity and honesty from Canada. Some members of the coalition are not sending any troops over there. Canada who is not officially part of the coalition has troops on site. We have troops in the area. The Americans expect much more honesty from Canada and a much clearer message.

Finally, I have another question for my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. He said that we should declare another war. That took me by surprise, but after hearing what he had to say, I was quite pleased. He was talking about a new war on poverty. I think he is right. That war should be fought all over the world, here, in Canada and in Quebec, and also in Iraq, after the war.

Does the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord agree that, in order to have the resources needed to wage war on poverty, we should drop fewer bombs on Baghdad, given what they cost, because then we might have more money to fight poverty, hunger and the destruction caused by the bombs being dropped every day on Baghdad?

•(1645)

Mr. André Harvey: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Indeed we live in a free country and obviously people from every party may express their views. They are not always very constructive. If there has been any confusion, it certainly has not come from the government, least of all from the Prime Minister. From the very beginning he has been saying that should there be an intervention, it had to be led by the United Nations.

Regarding another contributing factor in the confusion, we exchange military personnel with our allies. We could call them

Supply

operational exchanges. We cannot send soldiers one day and call them back the next. They are involved in operational exchanges.

There is no confusion on the part of the government. Our only goal is to further bolster the United Nations' credibility, further strengthen the organization, as well as every agency that comes under its responsibility, be it the World Food Program, CARE Canada, Oxfam or UNICEF, so that one day we are serious and well equipped to wage war against poverty.

I believe that this is the next step and that we are on the verge of what could be called the golden age of international cooperation. I am proud to work in this area.

For the past two years, with the millennium statement and the Kananaskis summit where the Prime Minister of Canada said that the foremost priority must be the war against poverty, especially on the African continent, I have been very optimistic that Canada's role will continue to be extremely constructive and even more so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, Aboriginal Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I found particularly revealing in reviewing Ambassador Paul Cellucci's speech of last week was not so much his expression of "disappointment" and "upset" with Canada's decision not to join the war on Iraq, but his reference to Canada as "family".

For a country like Canada that had felt ignored in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 when U.S. President George Bush did not appear to number Canada among U.S. friends, more oversight than advertence, the reference to Canada as family ought normally to have been encouraging in its characterization.

What Ambassador Cellucci's statement appears to reveal is a deep sense of psychological hurt on the part of the United States, and one grounded more in the harmful, if not hurtful, statements made by some Canadian MPs than in the actual decision or policy of the Canadian government.

For the essential truth is that we are family, that the ties that bind are many and meaningful on multiple levels, on levels of family itself, security, community, culture, environment, economy and the like.

Supply

It is no less true that despite the ties that bind, we may often differ domestically speaking, as the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra put it, in our attitudes to health care, gun control, capital punishment, social policy and the like, just as we have differed internationally on a variety of matters, including treaties respecting children's rights, landmines, climate change, the ICC and, now most recently, on the timing and conditions precedent for action to disarm Iraq.

Simply put, we differed, in my view, with our American counterparts not on principle, such as the imperative of disarming Iraq or the evil represented by Saddam Hussein or the imperative of bringing Saddam Hussein to justice, but we differed on the means to achieve this.

The difference, then, was one of judgment, on our belief that all remedies short of war had not been exhausted, that the requisite international support had not yet been assembled, that the case for war, which might have in any case ended up being inevitable, had not yet ripened. I use that term in its juridical as well as a factual sense.

And so we sought, through a bridging proposal, to identify clear disarmament benchmarks, to set a deadline of March 28 for compliance, and to include a provision for automaticity, an automatic trigger for the use of force if the disarmament benchmarks were not complied with by the deadline, a notion of automaticity which the U.S. acknowledged at the time was not present in UN Security Council resolution 1441.

The United States' judgment on timing, conditions and context, including imminence of threat, was different, but it is important we appreciate that there is a shared judgment on matters of principle as reflected in the motion before the House.

It is important again, as my colleague the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra put it, that we avoid simplistic notions of for and against, of all right or all wrong and once and for all, that we avoid these types of characterization on matters which do not lend themselves to oversimplified characterization and partake of a shifting context and set of conditions.

Accordingly, I would like to share some perspectives, if not principles, of partnership that may underpin our approach not only to the war in Iraq and beyond, but to our ongoing relationship with our neighbour.

First, we need to understand, to show understanding of, the impact of 9/11 on the American psyche and politics, for 9/11, and I sense this on each occasion on which I visit with colleagues in the United States, had a transformative impact in America. For America the world was changed. The post-9/11 configuration of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and rogue states not only dramatized for the United States the changed threat environment, but also transformed for it the United States national security doctrine that needed to result from it.

Second, we need to reassert, indeed reaffirm, our commitment to the struggle against terrorism, which is as much, in this sense of recommitment, of symbolic as well as substantive value and which speaks to the post-9/11 prism that underlies the American security doctrine.

I am not saying that we should take the same approach as the United States does to the struggle on terrorism. I know we have different appreciations, both domestically in our approach to an international criminal justice optic to that of the United States in its more national security oriented optic, and internationally it has an armed conflict model resulting from 9/11 that is not yet part of our doctrine.

• (1650)

What has to be appreciated is that the war against terrorism is an organizing idiom of American public policy, both domestic and international, and finds institutional expression in the initiation and organization of the department of homeland security, almost the most radical transformation of American governmental organization in years.

We need to appreciate, therefore, the American mindset, not that we have to agree with it, and give expression at the same time to what is indigenous to our own approach to the struggle against terrorism. I am referring to our juridical commitment to the struggle against terrorism which has characterized our approach, which includes as well the appreciation that what underlines everything here has to be the promotion and protection of human security, of the security of democracies and the protection of the most fundamental rights of inhabitants of that democracy: the right to life, liberty and security to a person.

Third, we need to engage with the United States and Britain in the reform of the United Nations, lest the UN become yet another casualty of the war on Iraq. This would include the rethinking of international law in a post-9/11 universe, in terms of the rethinking, for example, of the doctrine of self-defence; of hosting a conference on international humanitarian law; of addressing and redressing situations where the United Nations system becomes hijacked by rogue states; of the consideration of the formation of a democratic caucus; and more.

Fourth, we need to appreciate the importance of combating the financing of international terrorism, the soft underbelly of the terrorist threat environment, which makes possible the recruitment, training, harbouring and launching of acts of terror.

I am pleased that we did ratify the international convention on the suppression of the financing of terrorism and that we enacted domestic legislation for the purposes of implementing that international commitment. We have to keep a watching brief so that we are sure that we put the best application, such as in Fintrac and otherwise, which has been excellent in its performance and application in this struggle.

Fifth, we need to take the lead, and we are well positioned by our commitment to international justice to do so, to establish an international criminal tribunal for Iraq, the same way we did with respect to an international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, so that we can bring Saddam Hussein and his co-conspirators to justice. Indeed, it is a tragedy that we did not do so in the early 1990s at the same time as we established the international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

Supply

Just as the international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia led in its juridical expression, I believe, to the delegitimation of Milosevic, to regime change, so might we have achieved a regime change in Iraq by juridical means. At the same time, I believe we would have been able to pre-empt, if I can use that term, to prevent the continuing criminality of Saddam Hussein.

The very fact that in the aftermath of the Iraqi genocidal Anfal campaign in 1988 and in the aftermath of the genocidal campaign against the Marsh Arabs in the south of Iraq at the end of the first gulf war, we still could not bring ourselves to set up an international criminal tribunal for Iraq which allowed Saddam Hussein to interpret from our inaction, if not indifference, that he could continue with his Nuremberg criminality.

The fact that some states, such as Russia and France, continued to trade and invest in Iraq while this Nuremberg criminality was going on, was a mockery of international law and a mockery of international morality.

Six, we need to participate in the provision of emergency humanitarian relief. I am pleased that we have allocated \$100 million for that purpose.

Seven, we need to assume our rightful responsibility in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq, the rehabilitation of its citizenry and the re-establishment of the rule of law that is our best guarantee for the promotion and protection of the human security of the Iraqi people.

Eight, we need not equivocate or appear ambiguous about the prior and continuing anti-terror and military presence we have in the Persian Gulf as we have also in Afghanistan. We need not apologize for our role in the AWACS system, in our military exchange agreements or for our ships in the gulf area. To withdraw that now would be to take sides, and on the wrong side. To refuse to acknowledge this presence is to appear diffident or indifferent to the presence and fate of those sent there at our direction.

Nine, we need to emphasize the importance of border security, not just in trade terms but in security terms. This is, after all, not just a matter of economics but of human security.

Ten, we need to eschew and reject any notions of moral equivalences between the U.S. and Iraq and eschew any indifference about the outcome of this war, which we trust will conclude with a minimum of civilian harm, the averting of humanitarian catastrophe, the prevention of regional instability and the protection against hate and incitement. The objective in this war is the disarmament of the Saddam Hussein regime, not the armament of the constituencies of hate and terror.

• (1655)

Eleven, we should intensify parliamentary track II diplomacy, not abandon foreign policy to the executive level. We should enhance our parliamentary contacts with the U.S. and use our good offices in the multilateral parliamentary arena for post-war diplomacy.

Finally, we should internalize the Hippocratic oath of "Do no harm" in our discourse with our neighbours. We should guard against harmful and hurtful language, and neither indulge nor acquiesce in any such gratuitous expression. This is not to say that we will not disagree with our neighbours, and this is not to say that

we should refrain from any critique of any policy of our neighbours with which we disagree and where we consider it warranted, but it must be done on the merits and not ad hominem.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, listening to the hon. member in a debate is mind-blowing, and this one met the bar completely. I thank him for the wisdom he shares with the House.

I cannot comment on all the 11 items that he articulated but I do have two things to ask him.

First, had we been able to deflect the negativism of Russia and France, vis-à-vis continued relations with Iraq and therefore been able to set up a tribunal similar to Rwanda, does the hon. member think that the sheer logistics of that might not still have been daunting?

Second, I would ask him to comment on his thesis for reform of the Security Council and the United Nations with which I concur. I was utterly dismayed when on a recent visit we met with the committee responsible for looking into the reform of the Security Council. The committee had been about its task for eight years, and I found that rather discouraging.

Perhaps he could share a few more enlightening comments with the House.

• (1700)

Mr. Irwin Cotler: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who has herself graced the House with her own expertise and eloquence.

On the first matter, as to whether we might have been able, had we succeeded in deflecting the opposition of Russia and France, to set up an international criminal tribunal for Iraq, might the logistics not have been daunting? They may have been difficult but I do not believe they would have been more daunting than that which occurred in the matter of setting it up for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Indeed, I do not know what could have been more daunting than what had to be set up for Rwanda in the aftermath of the horrific and preventable genocide in Rwanda.

I would have hoped that had we set it up for Iraq at the time in the early 1990s, we would have at least deterred the subsequent and continuing criminality of Saddam Hussein and his regime. We would have at least deterred other countries that might have sought to trade and invest in Iraq. We might have given encouragement to the Iraqi people that we take our commitments seriously, not as they were abandoned in the immediate aftermath of the uprising that they were invited to undertake at the end of the first gulf war. The very establishment of the international criminal tribunal for Iraq would have sent a message to the Iraqi people of showing solidarity with them. That might have encouraged them in the kind of impetus for regime change that we abandoned them in with respect to their revolt.

Supply

On the matter of the United Nations and the Security Council and the difficulties of reform, I am not unmindful of those difficulties. Therefore I specified certain specific approaches that we could take. I do believe that we need to rethink, in the light of a post-9/11 universe, some of the foundational doctrines of international law on the use of force.

It is not that I share the American approach with respect to the doctrine of the pre-emptive use of force, I have written elsewhere about it, but I do think we have to rethink the notion of the two exceptions to the use of force, namely, the right of self-defence in response to an armed attack and the necessary authorization by the UN Security Council. Each of those two may have to be revisited. I do not think we can any longer say in a post-9/11 universe that a state has to await an armed attack, because that will in fact convert the United Nations charter into a suicide pact. We need to decide what the nature is of the degree of imminence and clear and present danger that is necessary for purposes of authorizing the use of the right of self-defence.

Similarly, we have to rethink the notion of a UN Security Council authorization. Let me give one example. In the Kosovo principle and precedent it had been mentioned earlier that the resolution was vetoed or not passed, but it was deemed to have legitimacy because the preponderance of members of the Security Council did in fact support it. It did not pass only because of the Russian veto, so we may have to rethink our notions of legitimacy.

We certainly have to re-address norms of international humanitarian law because we are now in the age of super technology in the matter of the exercise of warfare, but the collateral damage that is thought to be prevented still occurs and can still be serious and sustained. We have to address notions of international humanitarian law, how we can give expression and protection to the cardinal principle of the protection of civilian immunity, the prohibition on the indiscriminate use of force and the prohibition on the targeting of mixed civilian-military targets where we cannot distinguish between them and the like.

Finally, on the matter of the UN commission on human rights, I think we can establish criteria that will be such that it will not give exculpatory immunity to the violators but will protect those democracies that are singled out for differential and discriminatory treatment.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time.

I also would like to say how much I enjoyed listening to the member for Mount Royal both in the House today and in committee this morning. He is always worth a careful listen. He always has more to say than the time allows. The two things are not necessarily compatible but we do have some flexibility in this place.

For the viewers I would like to read quickly the Canadian Alliance motion:

That the House of Commons express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

There are three main elements to the motion: an apology for inappropriate statements made against the U.S. by certain members of the House; hope for the U.S.-led coalition success for regime change in Iraq; and that Canada help the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq. This is a no nonsense, straightforward, unambiguous motion unlike the position of the government and unlike the undisciplined and ill-considered remarks of some government members, including members of the cabinet.

Members of Parliament should be responsible for their actions. The motion demands accountability for these actions. The motion also calls on the government to take a principled unambiguous position. This is very unlike the unprincipled and ambiguous position of the Government of Canada to date. This was well described by Andrew Coyne in the *National Post* on March 31. I will quote a small part of his satirical column in trying to describe Canada's position on Iraq. It states:

Do we make ourselves clear? We are not contributing ground troops to this war. That is to say, we are, but they are not in Iraq. That is to say, they are, but they are not in combat. That is to say, they are. But we do not support them being there.

Let us be clear. We are in favour of UN resolutions but against their enforcement; against the use of force but in favour of threat of it; against fighting the war, but in favour of winning it. This is part of Canada's unique national identity. Other countries may support the war without participating in it. Only Canada is participating without supporting it.

I called it satire. The unfortunate part is that the satire is true, which is why so many Canadians who have been closely following the government's actions on Iraq are so embarrassed.

Let us talk about the first part of today's motion with respect to the offensive and inappropriate statements of members of the House.

The largest bilateral trade dispute in the world is the softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the U.S. As trade critic, I am not happy with the performance of the government, the trade minister or the U.S. department of commerce in settling this dispute, but my severest criticism is reserved for the senior cabinet minister from British Columbia who is also the natural resources energy minister. The minister let his mouth run loose. He said, "The world expects someone who is the president of a superpower to be a statesman. I think he has let not only Americans but the whole world down by not being a statesman".

He said this after the Prime Minister earlier the same day warned his caucus not to talk that way. The minister is in a leadership role and his comments have hurt Canadians and his prime constituency, British Columbians. Rather than apologize or retract, he stayed silent and tried to obfuscate. Canadians deserve better from senior elected officials.

● (1705)

Does the government support removal of the Saddam Hussein regime? It depends which minister is speaking and what day of the week it is. That is the reason we included this in our opposition motion. We want to get the government on record.

The international community has had a long run with Saddam Hussein. There is a lot of history just in this House of Commons. The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein preceded coalition action in the 1991 gulf war. Here is what our current Prime Minister said on January 12, 1991, "Mulroney has committed our troops there because he likes to be friends with George Bush. I don't want to be friends with George Bush".

On January 15, 1991 the now Prime Minister said, "We say that this is not the time for war and that there are other means such as sanctions, embargos and diplomacy". However on January 23, just over a week later, the dove turned into a hawk. He said, "In order to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, you have to crush him". Later, in 1998 when there was renewed tension in the gulf, the hawk turned into an eagle. On December 17, 1998 he said, "We support the bombing. Saddam Hussein got what he should have expected to get".

Earlier this year at the end of January there was a take note debate in the House on Iraq. There was an opposition motion on February 6 and an emergency debate on March 17 and yet again another opposition motion on April 3. Why are there all these requests for House time on Iraq? Quite simply, it is because trying to pin down the government on its position on Iraq has been virtually impossible. Through February and March we did not know if the government would participate in the coalition only if the UN Security Council approved action or if the government would participate in concert with our allies, the U.S., the U.K., Australia and what is now some 40 other nations.

What did the government do finally? It said no because France said it could veto any Security Council resolution. Therefore, no new UN resolution was forthcoming. Canada did not express a sovereign decision. The Prime Minister allowed France to determine our position. What an unprivileged sellout.

I am personally embarrassed by the Government of Canada's abandonment of its friends, neighbours, allies, tradition and history. The Prime Minister has guaranteed his legacy and it is not a pretty picture.

The Prime Minister is on record as saying he did not want to be friends with George Bush, Sr. We know there is no friendship between the Prime Minister and George Bush, Jr. We are left with the terrible possibility that the Prime Minister wants to be friends with none other than Saddam Hussein.

Everything the Prime Minister has uttered about Iraq is illogical when placed in chronological order with previous and subsequent statements. Liberal ministers are left without a clear mandate or terms of reference and have to make it up as they go along.

Therefore, the Minister of National Defence is saying that the Canadian officers in Iraq with the U.S., U.K. and Aussie forces are non-combatants. It just so happens that the other side does not know this in the field and they are in harm's way. The government seems to think because we cannot shoot back that everything is okay, but of course we know this is not true either. The lack of clarity and support for our troops from the government is inexcusable.

I spoke on the weekend in Seattle at the Asia Pacific round table. I talked to Americans, naturalized Asian Americans and Asians. It was

Supply

not just U.S. residents who were bewildered and puzzled by the Canadian position on Iraq, but also the Asian participants.

There is a lot more at stake here than Canada's relationship with the U.S. Also at stake is the signal we send to the rest of world: are we a reliable ally or not? The message the government has been sending since September 11, 2001 has been contrary to the Canadian national interest.

• (1710)

In conclusion, it is time to clear the slate. It is time for all members of the House to clearly support this unambiguous and necessary motion by the Canadian Alliance.

• (1715)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech with great interest. I could not agree more with the hon. member when he said that it is time we ended this nonsense and showed our friends to the south exactly where we stand on many issues.

I say this because throughout our history, outside the brief time in 1812 when we had a conflict with the Americans, we have been their allies and they have been our allies. They have come to our aid many times as we have to theirs, sometimes maybe not as fast as we would have liked, such as in regard to the second world war, but they came. Not only that but a lot of people tend to forget that the Americans supplied munitions and food during the time when they were not involved directly in the conflict.

I find it terribly frustrating that this friendship is at stake not because of what the Canadian people have done but because of what the government has done. I was wondering if the member could tell us in his own words what has to be done in regard to extending our hand to the Americans.

Whether we like it or not, we need that neighbour to the south. We only stand here today in great part due to having that neighbour to the south.

Mr. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, a lot of Canadians who are embarrassed by the Canadian position on this issue are asking themselves, what can we do to turn this thing around? That is why we saw some very spontaneous rallies in Canada this past weekend and why there are more planned. This is an important question also for members of Parliament.

I went to the U.S. this past weekend for an engagement I had committed to long ago. For the first time ever I was actually embarrassed to display my Canadian identity publicly. It was the first time I had crossed the border into the U.S. and felt anything but proud. That is a great difficulty.

We are family, as the U.S. ambassador described. The Americans would be the first ones to come to our aid. There needs to be a very strong signal, a way at least to engage Canadians in recognizing our relationship. I go back to what I was promoting some time ago, and that is to recognize that on September 11, 2001, a lot more than the U.S. was attacked. Canada and all western nations were attacked.

Supply

I have asked for and received very short responses from the government. I have asked for a Canadian memorial to be built for the 26 Canadian victims. There is only one government memorial in this country. It was done by the province of Manitoba. Last September 11 I went to that memorial because it is the only one we have. Canadians who are not from Manitoba should not have to travel that far. We should have one national monument.

That is the start of the process from my perspective. There are obviously dozens of other things including a top-down revamp of the foreign policy posture of the government.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the motion today. It has already been read into the record so I will not repeat it.

It is enough to say that this is not our first effort to try to get the government to do the right thing in the House regarding our relationship with our American friends and our position on the Iraqi war. I hope the Liberals will support the motion in the long run and I hope that the logic of it will be forced upon them by next Tuesday when the vote will be taken.

I would like to deal with the first part of the motion last.

First, reaffirming our position as the closest friend and ally of the United States is surely the simplest part of the motion. What person here does not understand the idea that we share not only the longest undefended border with our American friends, but we also share common ideals, principles and values that make their nation great and ours as well. We have a commitment to democracy, the rule of law, property rights, their's may be stronger than ours. We have a commitment to due process and to do what is right even when it costs us sometimes.

Those kind of values are something that we share with our American friends and is something that we like to export around the world, even in our trading with other people in our business relationships. That is why we put free trade agreements in place and why we adhere to WTO rules and so on. We want other nations to understand that this is the way Canadians do business. We respect their ability to run their country and to do things differently but there are rules that we all play by. The Americans respect them.

They are our best friends, our best allies and our best partners economically, militarily and friendship wise and we have more ties in every way with the Americans. This part of the motion is easy to support and I cannot imagine anyone who will not support that wholeheartedly.

Second, the hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power, I think again is easy to support.

It is difficult to understand what the Liberal position is on this. On the one hand the Liberals say they are not in favour of regime change. On the other hand the Prime Minister says that of course he would like Saddam Hussein removed from power but he does not want it done by force. He would just as soon they had a general election to remove Saddam Hussein. It is just incredible.

Saddam Hussein has been terrorizing his own people for a dozen years. He invaded two other countries. He has used weapons of mass

destruction against his own people and against neighbouring countries. He has cared not a wit about environmental degradation, about human rights abuses, about the opinions of world leaders or the status of his own people. He needs to be replaced. Resolutions and hand-wringing will not get it done. The coalition will go in there and remove Saddam Hussein from power. Our party thinks that we should at least wish the U.S. success.

It is interesting that this motion does not even say that the government has to get in there, muck it out with them and do the heavy lifting. It only says that we wish them success.

Interestingly this morning the Deputy Prime Minister said that he preferred another motion. He had another idea. Part of the motion states, "our hope that the U.S. led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible with the fewest casualties". I agree with that part of the motion as well.

However what is the U.S. mission? The U.S. mission is regime change. The Deputy Prime Minister supports the mission of the U.S.-led coalition and hopes that it accomplishes as quickly as possible but the Liberals do not support regime change.

The Liberal position, again, is incomprehensible. It is embarrassing for Canadians to try to read the tea leaves on a daily basis of are we in the war or are we not and do we have troops there or not. We have naval vessels but they cannot intercept Iraqis but they can intercept terrorists. It is as if they have to examine the bombs on the boat. If the bombs say that they are made for terrorist purposes only, then I guess they can intercept it. It is just ridiculous and the position is untenable and illogical. That is why this is an effort at least to say that we wish them success.

● (1720)

The final part of the motion is that we urge the government to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq. The government says in its motion that it would like to commit Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. There is something appalling to the government about assisting the coalition. Members will not say those words. It is like the words cannot come out of their mouths, that it is a mental block when we say "assist the coalition". They are poisonous words to the Liberals but they should not be and they are not to Iraqis who are looking for help and assistance.

It is interesting to me that while the Americans and the coalition are putting together their armed forces and the military force to depose the tyrant, Saddam Hussein, alongside are supply ships full of medications and medicines, food, basic supplies, water purification, everything to help the Iraqi people. They are side by side with the military force. As soon as it was safe to go into Basra, they were there. They are trying their best to deliver that aid as quickly as possible.

We are saying let us assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq. I do not think there is much doubt about who will win this confrontation. I am sure the American-led coalition will win. I would say to the Liberals, can we not at least say that we will assist the coalition in the reconstruction? Can we not say that there are 40-some other countries there helping the Americans, that wish them well and will help with the reconstruction? Can we not at least say that we will help the coalition reconstruct Iraq for the benefit of the people of Iraq? For some reason, it is poison in the water on the Liberal side. They will not say it.

Finally, we have said that the House should express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain members of this House. There is not much doubt about the seriousness of this part of the motion. We have not condemned the government in here. I personally hold the government more responsible than this motion does. All we say is that the House of Commons expresses regret. We do not blame the government. We are not holding any particular member responsible. We are not naming a prime minister for example. We are not saying that the foreign affairs minister is the man to blame.

All we are saying is that we express regret to our American friends. We are sorry about some of the remarks made. We could go through the list again. We are sorry for calling people names and calling the American President scandalous names, and right in the middle of the war they are fighting on behalf of freedom loving people everywhere. We just say that we should express our regrets that we are sorry it happened. Let us put it behind us and let us move on. That should be easy to support as well.

One of the principles that I have learned from this is in a crucible of a crisis the real content of our character comes out. The real content of the character of the Liberals has manifested itself in the way they have attacked our American friends, and that is a shame. In the crucible of a crisis we do not develop our character or principles, it is manifested and it manifested itself in a very negative way. This motion should be passed to try to correct that.

Second, Canadians expect leadership when important complex issues face the country. Why did Prime Minister Blair consistently make the case for intervening in Iraq? Because he wanted to lead his people. He did not just read the polls, he led the people. Why has his support for the intervention in Iraq gone from 10% to 60% in three weeks? Because Prime Minister Blair led his country. We expected something similar from this government and we have been sadly disappointed.

Third, it is not my original comment but injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere and injustice to anyone is an injustice to everyone. The Prime Minister has said who is next if we depose Saddam Hussein and maybe we would have to depose the president of Zimbabwe or something. Maybe we should talk about that. Maybe we should start saying why has this government not stood four-square behind the people of Zimbabwe and kicked the ambassador of Zimbabwe out of this country? Why did we not say that kind of tyrant was not welcome in our country and the representation was not welcome? We are starting to send messages, not armed intervention but some kind of a message that this kind of action is not tolerated.

Royal Assent

Last, we cannot deter tyrants simply by having an international court. Tyrants are deterred by threatening to put them in front of a court for judgment.

● (1725)

Having a court by itself is not enough to deter tyrants from tyrannical action. They have to fear that one day they will be in front of that court facing the supreme punishment. Just to say that we hope the courts do the job is not enough. Tyrants need to know that they are one step away from judgment and when that happens, then the world will be a safer place and tyrants will be looking over their shoulders instead of committing ongoing acts of atrocity.

● (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings. Pursuant to order made earlier today all questions on the motion are deemed put and the recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Tuesday, April 8, at 3 p.m.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

April 3, 2003

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 3rd day of April, 2003 at 4:35 p.m.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Uteck

Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule says that royal assent was given to Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act, Chapter 5; and Bill C-227, An Act respecting a national day of remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Chapter 6.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ)** moved:

Motion M-391

That, in the opinion of this House, any free trade agreement entered into by Canada, whether bilateral or multilateral, must include rules for the protection of foreign investments which do not violate the ability of parliamentary and government institutions to act, particularly on behalf of the common good, and must exclude any investor-state redress provisions and consequently, the Canadian government must enter into negotiations with its American and Mexican partners with a view to bringing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in line with the aforementioned principles.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to move Motion No. 391, which calls on the Government of Canada to no longer negotiate a certain number of things in free trade agreements, whether bilateral, that is between Canada and another country, or multilateral, for example, within the current negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas or the World Trade Organization.

This motion calls on the Government of Canada to no longer negotiate rules for the protection of foreign investments that would violate the ability of parliamentary and government institutions to act on behalf of the common good and in the public interest.

I will read it so that everyone can understand what this debate is about:

That, in the opinion of this House, any free trade agreement entered into by Canada, whether bilateral or multilateral, must include rules for the protection of foreign investments which do not violate the ability of parliamentary and government institutions to act, particularly on behalf of the common good, and must exclude any investor-state redress provisions and consequently, the Canadian government must enter into negotiations with its American and Mexican partners with a view to bringing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in line with the aforementioned principles.

As I was saying, not only do we want, through this motion, to urge the Canadian government in the future to not negotiate provisions that violate public interest or the ability of parliamentary and government institutions to act, particularly on behalf of this public interest and the common good, but we also want the Canadian government to ban agreements including investor-state redress provisions. I will have the opportunity to come back to this point during my presentation.

Finally, further to the opinion provided to the government by the House, we consider it appropriate for the Canadian government to enter into negotiations with its American and Mexican partners with a view to bringing the North American Free Trade Agreement into line with the aforementioned principles, particularly in Chapter 11, which provides for the protection of foreign investments. For Canada, this would obviously involve investments by Mexico and the United States. For the United States, it would involve foreign investments by the other two partners, and so on for Mexico.

I remind the House that direct foreign investments have become the biggest challenge of current negotiations, with respect to both the FTAA and the WTO.

Each year, nearly \$4,000 billion US is directly invested abroad by the various countries. Of course, the vast majority of these

investments come from Northern or developed countries, around the world.

As for Canada, every year, \$430 billion are directly invested abroad by Canadian companies and individuals.

The negotiation of rules for the protection of foreign investments has become a major issue. Let us take, for instance, the last meeting of the Ministers for International Trade held in Doha. Nobody, including our own international trade minister, expected specific discussions over the issue of investments. Before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the minister told us that, in terms of investments, he did not expect anything to come out of the meeting in Doha.

Surprisingly, the Ministers for International Trade agreed to begin discussions about the provisions for the protection of investments that could be included in the World Trade Organization agreement.

Therefore, we have to be very clear on the issue of protecting investments. We have a problem with the model currently included in the North American Free Trade Agreement. The House should make it clear that it is against using the current NAFTA model in the upcoming negotiations on the protection of investments.

There are at least three issues that need to be raised about chapter 11 of NAFTA. The first is the notion of expropriation, which is much too broad and would now include direct expropriation, meaning that if a firm has assets abroad that a level of government needs to expropriate for some reason, compensation will be granted, which is only normal.

● (1735)

Not only does direct expropriation now give rise to compensation, but if memory serves, with section 1110 of chapter 11, the concept of expropriation now extends to loss of profits, which are referred to as indirect expropriations.

For example, during a temporary Canadian government moratorium, the American company SD Myers, which was supposed to receive PCBs from Canada for destruction by burning, claimed it had been dispossessed of an economic activity and thus deprived of profits. It went before a special NAFTA chapter 11 tribunal and was awarded \$6 million in compensation. This was not for activities carried out, but for activities it could have carried out, had it not been for the Canadian regulations.

In our opinion, this concept of indirect expropriation is abusive and we should revert to the concept of expropriation of actual assets.

The second problematical element in NAFTA's chapter 11 is the expanded concept of investment. Lending agencies are now also considered investors under the provisions of NAFTA and those relating to the protection of investments.

Private Members' Business

We might find ourselves in a very strange situation where a bank could loan money to a Canadian, an American or a Mexican company. While that company might not feel that it has been harmed in any way following the enforcement of this new legislation or of new regulations, the bank that has loaned the money could, under chapter 11, challenge the government decision and seek some compensation under the agreement.

Finally, the third problem is with the investor-state redress provisions that allow foreign companies recourse not available to domestic companies. These foreign companies can bring the governments before the special courts—as I have mentioned in the case of SD Myers—something a first nations company cannot do. I think it is totally unfair to put the public and private interests on the same footing. Which is why I think we should eliminate the investor-state redress provisions.

Also, the special courts set up under NAFTA are not transparent enough, as was recognized by the Minister for International Trade.

So far, there have been just over 20 suits filed by companies, either in Canada, the United States or Mexico. I think it is important to mention that almost half of these suits have involved environmental issues.

Since we have just signed the Kyoto protocol, we will soon be looking at the implementation phase. Well, chapter 11 of NAFTA could very well become, in the hands, for instance, of American companies—need I remind the House that the United States has not signed the Kyoto protocol—a weapon against any new initiative the Canadian government or the provinces might want to take.

As I said earlier, these provisions would not prevent governments from taking any action, but they would allow companies to seek compensation. Therefore, Canada and Quebec would have to pay to be able to uphold their international commitments under the Kyoto protocol.

I mentioned that there were some 20 suits. As for Canada, I can point out a few. In the case of Ethyl Corporation, there was an out of court settlement that cost Canadian taxpayers \$13 million; SD Myers—I mentioned it earlier—cost \$6 million; there was Pope & Talbot, which challenged an agreement that Canada had signed with the United States and which provided for quotas. It felt it had been penalized by this agreement. Indeed, the Americans forced us to sign it because they were challenging, as they are doing now, our forestry management in the case of the softwood lumber industry.

UPS is currently suing the Canadian government. Last December, the Canadian government lost the first level of appeal because it claimed that the grievance filed by UPS did not come under chapter 11, but under another chapter of NAFTA. However, the court decided that it had jurisdiction.

There are also Sun Belt Water and Crompton Corporation which are suing or want to sue the Canadian government under chapter 11. There are other cases in the United States. There are also some in Mexico.

Thus, on the whole, the existence of this chapter 11 in NAFTA and in other bilateral agreements signed by Canada raises a problem of governance and democracy.

●(1745)

When democratic bodies, elected representatives, be it Parliament or the government, make decisions, it seems to me that these decisions must have precedence over private interests. However, NAFTA, specially chapter 11, gives equal importance to private interests and the public interest, the common good, the common interest.

Even if in general the best interest of multinationals or foreign firms operating in a country coincides with the common good and the public interest, it is not necessarily true all the time. This is why we believe we must have foreign investment protection clauses that give precedence to the public interest.

The second matter at issue, after this matter of governance and democracy, has to do with other NAFTA provisions. Some in particular, under chapter 12, which deals with trade and services, are putting pressure on our public services in Canada and Quebec.

I mentioned UPS a moment ago. This shows that private businesses and multinationals can use NAFTA provisions to challenge, for instance, Canada Post's monopoly, claiming unfair competition with regard to courier services. That is what UPS has done.

As for health care, it is clear that the current agreements are protecting our health care system as it stands now, but are preventing its expansion. In this regard, it is worth noting that several studies done for the Romanow Commission showed the dangers posed by chapter 11 of NAFTA in particular.

I am referring to, for instance, study No. 32, conducted by Richard Ouellet, of Laval University, entitled "The Effects of International Trade Agreements on Canadian Health Measures: Options for Canada with a View to the Upcoming Trade Negotiations". Mr. Ouellet talked about potential major risks for our health care system.

Another study entitled "How will International Trade Agreements Affect Canadian Health Care?" was conducted by Mr. Jon R. Johnson. It is study No. 22. It is even more clear.

I will quote a short paragraph from page 29.

The single provision in all the trade liberalizing agreements that has the most negative potential impact on Canada's public health care is NAFTA Article 1110. If this provision and the accompanying investor/state dispute settlement procedures had existed in the 1960s, the public health care system in its present form would never have come into existence.

This is the article on expropriation and compensation that I was talking about earlier.

This is extremely worrisome, and it seems to us that this House should tell the government that the whole chapter 11 should be reviewed and that, in the future, we should not include similar provisions in the agreements that we sign.

Unfortunately, I notice that Canada has signed 18 agreements with southern countries that include chapters on the protection of investments that are similar to NAFTA's model.

Private Members' Business

So, as I mentioned, we must reject this approach and redirect it with our partners. Currently, when there is a dispute at the World Trade Organization, it is dealt with between states. It is not Bombardier or EMBRAER that sues the Brazilian government or the Canadian government. It is the Canadian government and the Brazilian government that represent the interests of their respective companies.

In the FTA, which preceded NAFTA, chapter 19 included a state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism. As for the FTAA and the WTO, the Minister for International Trade has always told us that it was out of the question to have an investment protection model similar to the one found in chapter 11.

In the proposals that it just tabled as part of the WTO negotiations, the European Union announced that it categorically rejects the investor-state dispute settlement procedure. Finally, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs also rejected it last spring.

For all these reasons, we must go back to a foreign investment protection mechanism that gives priority to the common good, that tightens up the definitions of expropriation and investment, and that prohibits the investor-state dispute settlement procedure and goes back to a state-to-state mechanism.

For all these reasons, I am convinced that the vast majority of members in this House will support motion M-391.

[English]

Mr. Murray Calder (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to say right off the bat that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Minister for International Trade do not support Motion No. 391.

One of the key objectives of the Government of Canada is the promotion of prosperity. From trade and foreign policy perspectives, there are two key elements required to meet this objective.

First, we need to foster the expansion of Canada's international and economic interests abroad. This is achieved by gaining and maintaining market access for Canadian goods and services and by supporting and protecting Canadian investment interests in foreign markets.

Second, the government policy needs to support a secure and predictable business environment. This is critical if we are to successfully attract foreign investment into Canada and create a competitive environment where the import of ideas, goods, services and capital can be combined with Canada's resources.

How can Canada benefit from investment flows? Capital flows worldwide have grown rapidly in recent years, far faster than trade over the past two decades, and have contributed to global economic integration. Canada is an active player in this global economy. For example, Canadian direct investment abroad more than quadrupled from \$98 billion in 1990 to \$432 billion in 2002. Over the same period, direct investment in Canada more than doubled, from \$131 billion to \$349 billion in 2002. It is interesting to note that since 1996 Canadian direct investment abroad has surpassed foreign direct investment in Canada.

These dramatic figures underline the fact that Canadian businesses know that if they are to prosper they must compete internationally. Many Canadian companies not only export their goods and services but have also established production facilities abroad through international investment or established a commercial presence in foreign markets in order to supply their services. Other companies have significant minority ownership in companies in foreign markets. International investment is thus becoming a central element for success in today's global economy. As such, the Canadian business community has established high standard and internationally agreed upon rules that ensure a level and transparent playing field and include recourse for impartial dispute settlements, which is critical for companies who invest abroad.

Outward investment plays an important role in promoting Canada's interests. Outward foreign direct investment creates jobs abroad and at home as it strengthens the commercial links between countries by establishing a presence in foreign markets and by sharing Canadian expertise. It also increases the export of our goods and services.

This positive link between outward investment and jobs at home was highlighted in a 1999 OECD study of 14 countries, which estimated that each dollar of outward investment generated \$2 of additional exports. This is good for us as an exporting country.

On the flip side, foreign investment in Canada is a major source of economic growth and an important contributor to the creation of jobs here at home, often higher paying and more highly skilled ones. In addition, research shows that inward foreign investment spurs innovation by bringing new ideas and technologies to our companies, providing much needed additional capital, and contributing to exports. Such investment makes our country economically stronger and contributes to a higher quality of life for all Canadians.

Why does Canada need investment agreements? Given the important contribution made by international investment to the economy of all countries, it is not surprising that governments are increasingly establishing the frameworks necessary to create an attractive investment environment. For many countries, this has meant simplification or abolition of investment screening mechanisms, the easing of sectoral investment restrictions, and the opening of entire sectors to foreign investment.

● (1750)

Frequently, these domestic efforts to improve the investment climate have been augmented by the international agreements, which provide rules at the international level to promote and protect investments.

The desire of government to facilitate freer flows of international investment through international rule-making is reflected in the dramatic increase of the number of bilateral investment treaties, BITs, during the 1990s. These treaties were designed to provide predictability, protection and transparency, and access for investors in specific priority and emerging economies. There are now in the range of 2,000 BITs worldwide, compared to less than 400 at the beginning of the 1990s.

At the regional and multilateral level, groups of countries have begun to pursue investment rule-making. Arrangements as diverse as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of South-east Asian Nations, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and the Southern Cone Common Market have all made commitments to the development of rules reflecting and liberalizing investment policies.

Typically, these agreements focus on improving the conditions under which investments are made and include key principles such as: transparency, by providing open reporting and publishing of national investment rules and relevancy regulation changes so that investors can have a clear understanding of the rules of the game; non-discrimination, by undertaking obligations not to discriminate against investors on the basis of their nationality; protection, by ensuring fair and equitable treatment in accordance with the customary international law standards for the treatment of aliens, compensation in the event of expropriation, and free cross-border transfer of funds; and finally, the impartial dispute settlement mechanism, which we have used many times, by providing binding dispute settlement procedures to settle disputes arising from alleged breaches of the obligations taken by the parties.

A medium-sized and open economy such as Canada has supported these principles in the international trade and investment area. This is what Canada has promoted in numerous international negotiations, including the NAFTA and our bilateral Foreign Investment Protection and Promotion Agreements, FIPAs. The rules within the NAFTA and the FIPAs provide a framework of disciplines to encourage efficient resolution of disputes and greater consistency in legal and policy regimes. These rules are often for a greater measure of security for Canadian investors through assurances that national policies would not be changed unduly or applied in a discriminatory manner.

Canada has numerous agreements which contain investment protection rules and provide recourse for impartial investment state dispute settlement. These rules ensure that business investors would be treated even-handedly and in accordance with international law by setting out dispute resolution procedures to resolve disputes between the investor and the host government.

I believe that Motion No. 391 is redundant because we already have the rules in place.

• (1755)

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 391 brought forward by the member for Joliette. It reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, any free trade agreement entered into by Canada, whether bilateral or multilateral, must include rules for the protection of foreign investments which do not violate the ability of parliamentary and government institutions to act, particularly on behalf of the common good, and must exclude any

Private Members' Business

investor-state redress provisions and consequently, the Canadian government must enter into negotiations with its American and Mexican partners with a view to bringing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in line with the aforementioned principles.

This is all about chapter 11 of NAFTA. Many Canadians have heard about chapter 11 in reference to the bankruptcy rules in the U.S. and that is a large point of confusion. What we are talking about here is chapter 11 of NAFTA, something quite separate and different.

The premise of the member's motion runs contrary to the principle of national treatment which mandates that foreign based companies should be treated the same as domestic ones unless compensated. National treatment investor rules are contained in chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA.

If foreign companies believe they will not be discriminated against then more companies will compete to provide goods and services. Competition ensures that Canadians, or our trading partners, receive the highest value for their hard earned money.

The Bloc Québécois, Maude Barlow, the NDP, and environmental activists argue that chapter 11 of NAFTA would destroy the ability of Canada's three levels of government to make individual decisions and that corporations would be able to challenge Canadian sovereignty in areas such as health care, education, labour and environmental standards. They never talk about investor protection for Canadian companies in other countries.

Chapter 11 allows private companies to sue federal governments covered under NAFTA over policies that expropriate their profits. Chapter 11 was designed to help reduce the risk of investing in foreign countries. It embodies the strongest rights and remedies ever granted to foreign investors in an international agreement. The process allows foreign investors to utilize a country's domestic court system or alternatively to use independent arbitrators instead. This is only fair. This gives foreign investors remedies available beyond the domestic courts which may be stacked completely against them.

Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement sets down the rules protecting foreign investors in the three countries bound by NAFTA: Canada, Mexico and the U.S.

There are two sections of the chapter, the first being substantive and the second outlining procedures for dispute resolution. The second section is where the tribunals under the authority of supranational bodies and agreements are set up, namely, the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes in the World Bank and the United Nations International Convent on International Trade Law.

Despite all of the international agreements that we have seen proliferate in the world, chapter 11 in NAFTA is unique. It is the first comprehensive, international trade treaty to provide to private parties direct access to dispute settlement as a right.

Private Members' Business

●(1800)

Chapter 11, by all accounts, has been controversial largely because of various high profile environmental organizations that dominated much of the debate. The national treatment and most favoured nation status requirements are modeled on the similar provision in the World Trade Organization where they apply to trade in goods and services. A decision on whether to negotiate similar provisions in the WTO will be taken later this year at the ministerial meetings in Mexico.

There are reservations and exceptions to chapter 11. Various activities are excluded for all parties, including: education, health and welfare, procurement, subsidies, grants and foreign aid. Local government measures are not subject to direct claims, although non-conforming measures of local governments have been seen as indirectly the responsibility of national governments. We can talk about that when we talk about the Metalclad case which is one of the three cases trotted out as being the rationale for saying that chapter 11 should not be in NAFTA.

There are strict rules regarding expropriation and restrictions on the ability of the state to expropriate and a subsequent obligation to compensate. This section was designed primarily to protect investments from Canada and the U.S. from arbitrary government action, such as nationalization in Mexico, where the legal system was much less developed and private property rights less regularly protected.

What purpose does chapter 11 serve? At its most basic level, the theoretical economic and political basis for the provisions of the chapter lie in the principles of the sanctity of private property against random or unaccountable government action, and that of well-regulated market forces being most able to allocate private investment efficiently, thereby increasing productivity and general welfare.

High levels of investment are important for developing productivity and so we do not want to see discrimination between investment on the basis of origin, foreign or domestic, as it is counterproductive. Furthermore, the importance of transparency and codified regulatory frameworks are essential for attracting foreign investment. That is what chapter 11 is all about.

In a sense the chapter actually enhances national sovereignty insofar as measures which respect sovereignty are those which do not mandate unilateral sanctions or justify extraterritorial reach of national measures. I would argue that this chapter is a codified multilateral agreement entered into and maintained freely by sovereign governments who enter into it.

There have been three successful cases that are often talked about. One of the most prominent is the MMT case. In that case the Canadian government was found to have banned MMT without scientific evidence. We ended up paying a \$20 million out of court settlement to Ethyl Corporation. I was in the House of Commons when that happened. I can say with certainty that we warned the government not to expropriate MMT's profits by the actions it subsequently took and it ended up paying for them.

●(1805)

In the case of Metalclad, it only had a case because the Mexican government had assured them they had all the necessary permits, environmental and otherwise, to build an industrial waste facility. Then the city of Guadalupe refused to issue a building permit and the state government subsequently declared the site a nature reserve. This had nothing to do with environmental protection. It had everything to do with protection against unilateral action.

In summary, I oppose the bill.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to briefly make some comments on the motion introduced by the member for Joliette, Motion No. 391. I congratulate the member for bringing the motion before the House. It is an extremely important discussion and one that needs a good deal more public debate and parliamentary debate.

I guess I should not be surprised, but I never cease to be disappointed, that instead of really addressing the substantive issue that has brought forward the motion, what we heard from the government member who spoke was the usual hyperbolic ecstasy about how wonderful and flawless the free trade agreements have been into which the government has entered.

Although I did not manage to hear all of his comments due to another commitment, I did hear enough to know that basically what he was doing was waxing eloquent about how much satisfaction there is among investors with the provisions of this series of free trade agreements into which Canada has entered and would propose to further involve itself.

I have no doubt that it is true that in the main investors are quite pleased with the support of the government to put in place what has been acknowledged to be a unique provision in a trade agreement which is one, we could say, I think if we were to look at it superficially, to just address the question, of being evenhanded and fair in the treatment of investors.

However, I think if we were to look more closely at the concerns that arise from a great many individual citizens, a great many parliamentarians of not just one political stripe but several, and certainly among a good many countries that have had the opportunity to look at this issue from the point of view of whether they would want to see a chapter 11, as currently included in NAFTA, reproduced and further extended to all of North America, there are indeed substantive concerns that underlie the reservations that have been raised.

I think at the very heart is not the idea that any of the critics of chapter 11, any of those who feel that chapter 11 should be eliminated or massively renegotiated, is the concern that in fact what has happened is that the rights of citizens and, in some cases, the rights of communities, have been subjugated to the rights of investors.

Private Members' Business

I know that some who would critique those concerns would ask whether we were totally unconcerned that investors can face arbitrary measures that might result in unfair expropriation of property. We are not for a moment. There is the need, absolutely, to have a rules based system that governs international trade. Let me say clearly that is why the New Democratic Party has talked in the whole debate about fair trade. We made it clear that we are very much in favour of a rules based trading system.

The question is who will really get to craft, to shape the rules. Who will be the beneficiary and who will be the victim of rules if they are not evenhanded? I think that fundamentally it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that the ability of governments to act in the public interest is not just protected and preserved but in fact enhanced.

If there is one thing that has characterized a number of very alarming decisions that have been reached under this chapter 11 provision, which in our view needs to be overhauled, it is the subjugation of the public interest, the common good.

● (1810)

I could not believe my ears when I heard a member of the official opposition talking enthusiastically about how important it is to have regulations that provide important protections. These were welcome remarks to hear from those who have been so enthusiastic about deregulation on so many fronts embracing the importance of having regulations to govern trade relations as they should every other aspect of our economic and social relationships where there is the potential for the public interest to be overruled by powerful personal or private interests.

If we look at what has been at the heart of the Metalclad case and what has been at the heart of the MMT Ethyl Corporation case, it has been, in both of those cases, a real concern about the inability of citizens and communities to protect the public good. A suggestion was made that in the case of Metalclad the real problem was that Mexican laws were somehow inadequate or underdeveloped and therefore Metalclad had a claim to essentially say that they had interfered with its profits and therefore it had a basis for seeking redress.

Even if people are not familiar with all of the details of those cases, if what they are concerned about is protecting the public from environmental hazards, protecting the public from threats to public health, and it is determined that a municipality, in the case of Mexico, is not free to act on behalf of its citizens, then there is something wrong with the rules or the way in which the rules are being interpreted and enforced.

I do not think it is an accident that many municipal governments across this country have expressed alarm about this and some other provisions of the trade agreements into which the government has so enthusiastically entered or is trying to entice Canadians. The reality is that municipal governments are also there to protect the public interest. They have to be able to do so within a frame of reference and within a regulatory regime that allows them to act on behalf of the communities they were elected to represent.

It is regrettable in the extreme that the government appears to have moved from an earlier position. I heard this expressed again and

again by the international trade minister who recognizes the problems with chapter 11. I remember on several occasions when the international trade minister stood in the House and agreed that there were serious problems with chapter 11, that chapter 11 needed to be revised and revamped because it could not be allowed for corporate interests and corporate profits to override, as has happened in several high profile cases; the public interest, the public health and the community health.

I see that my time is up. I hope there can be some further serious engagement around the issues that are at the very heart of Motion No. 391 that has been introduced for debate today.

● (1815)

Perhaps government members could explain how it is that the government went from having a critical analysis of the problems posed by chapter 11, that allow for investor interests and corporate profits to take precedence over individual, community, citizen and public interest, and we could move forward with understanding at least why there has been this kind of retreat from what seemed to be a welcome enlightenment, a welcome progressive insight by the government as to why this needed to be addressed.

I congratulate the member for Joliette for putting the motion before the House and I hope we will have some further constructive debate on the issue.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I could almost pick up where I left off earlier this morning on a completely different debate because this morning we were talking about this sense of anti-Americanism that is coming out of I guess the government side of the House in relation to the war in the Middle East.

I think there will some connection made tonight between Motion No. 391 that we are speaking to now and the earlier debate today in the House.

I agree with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade. We will lay our cards on the table very quickly that we cannot support the motion for a number of reasons, primarily because if we were to open up NAFTA again or chapter 11, it just will not happen. It is a very complicated and convoluted process and we will not do that. We will make some suggestions, as we have done in the past, which the government might consider. I do not think it is inconsistent with what the government is thinking.

The ironic thing, of course, is that we are talking about the NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is basically the sister to the free trade agreement that we signed with the United States of America in 1988.

I cannot leave without saying, as I look across at the parliamentary secretary who will have a chuckle or two I am sure, that it was a very hotly debated issue in the 1988 election. In fact, historians refer to it now as being the free trade election. That was the first election I ever ran in and I was successful, but it was a tough election.

Private Members' Business

The truth is that the Liberal Party at that time, I guess that would have included you, Mr. Speaker, because you came to the House at the same time as I did, but your argument convinced the people down in Cornwall that you were the person and I guess my argument sustained me back in New Brunswick, on that we will agree, but the Liberal Party at the time railed against it. I cannot blame that on the parliamentary secretary because in a real sense I think he came after. I think he is a free trader and understands that issue very well and is a businessman himself, in fact a farmer.

That being said, the Prime Minister of course was the man who said that he was going to renegotiate NAFTA. His predecessor, Mr. Turner, was the man who was going to tear up the free trade agreement. He lost that debate in the election of 1988.

Of course, between 1988 and 1993, not a day went by in the House without the mention of the free trade agreement and how the Americans basically duped us and we were done in by them. In the early days of the free trade agreement there were some readjustments for Canadians. There was legitimate concern whether it would benefit us as we told the Canadian people it would.

History has proven us right, as you well know, Mr. Speaker. Some of the statistics that I will point to are proof of that. These are not my statistics. They come from the parliamentary secretary's office, from the Minister for International Trade.

Let us take a look at exports. The Americans are our biggest export market. Let me speak of Newfoundland for the member for St. John's West. The percentage of increase in exports from his part of the country since the inception of the free trade agreement in 1988 has been 246%.

In P.E.I., one of our smaller provinces, there was an increase of 603% since 1988. In my home province of New Brunswick there has been an increase of 257%. Actually some of the smaller provinces have done better than the larger ones on a percentile basis, although we could argue that the province that benefited the most obviously was Ontario, the industrial engine of Canada, if we listen to the Liberal members from Ontario.

• (1820)

An hon. member: Nova Scotia.

Mr. Greg Thompson: And then Nova Scotia, just for the record. If we could step through all the provinces, and maybe we will do that, 211%, and a lot of that is value added. At one time we were hewers of wood and drawers of water, but with the free trade agreement we were allowed to put that value added on our products and move them into the American market without the tariffs and restrictions that normally would have kept us out of that market.

The truth is that our logic prevailed in that big debate of 1988. I will go back to some of my earlier comments. Of course the prime minister of the day was the prime minister who was going to renegotiate NAFTA. That was part of the 1993 Liberal red book promise. As we stand here, not one comma, not one sentence, has been changed in NAFTA. If he had been paying attention to detail, he could have focused on chapter 11, in all sincerity, and he could have said that we do have a problem with it. Perhaps we should take a harder, tougher look at chapter 11. If we have any desire to change anything in the agreement, it would be chapter 11.

The PC Party is firmly committed to rules based trade and free trade, but we do acknowledge that there have been some misinterpretations of chapter 11. That is a given. Therefore, all future bilateral and multilateral agreements must be sure to include clauses in the agreements that address the original intent of chapter 11, clearly leaving no room for misinterpretation or distortion. That has happened in the past. But I do not think that in this case we should throw the baby out with the bathwater, if that is the correct analogy. I do not think we should do that. I think we should hold onto what we have because it is working, but we should address those deficiencies within the trade agreement. As I mentioned earlier but more precisely, rewording chapter 11 would be very difficult and therefore our party has suggested the inclusion of an interpretive clause to clarify chapter 11 provisions in the current NAFTA agreement.

We want to be the party that encourages global trade, free trade and open markets so that we are not subjected to the punitive actions of regimes that want to keep out our products. We are international traders and we want to continue to be international traders and play by the rules, as we always do.

Therefore, unfortunately, we cannot support the bill. As the parliamentary secretary said, and it is hard to believe I am actually in agreement with a Liberal member of Parliament in the House today, we might as well lay our cards on the table. We cannot support it. The agreement is working. NAFTA is working. The free trade agreement is working. We are global traders. If we have to make amendments to chapter 11, I am not sure that we want to sacrifice the trade agreement. It is working for us. We want to be free traders. We believe in international rules based trade. Let us continue on the path that has led us to the kind of prosperity that we have achieved in this country in the last 14 years.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The chair realizes that one member is seeking the floor, but I just want to point out that there is a minute left in the time provided for consideration of private members' business. With the consent of the House, we could see the clock as 6:30 p.m. and have the second hour of the debate on this motion on another day.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move that we now see the clock as 6:30 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement to see the clock as 6:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

AUTOMOTIVE POLLUTION REDUCTION ACT

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.) moved that Bill C-235, an act to protect human health and the environment by oxygenating automotive fuels, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the principle behind this bill is quite simple. In fact, the gasoline used in our cars, both public and private vehicles, is a great source of pollution. It contains seven pollutants, each more harmful than the other.

The idea behind the bill is the following: the more oxygen you put in gasoline, the less polluting it is. The more we manage to clean gasoline through oxygenation, the less pollution there will be.

In fact, public transportation is the largest contributor to air pollution. In terms of the seven air pollutants, transportation contributes from 19% to up to 60% of emissions.

For instance, public transportation accounts for 31% of CO₂ emissions. By transportation, I mean general transportation, whether it is private, institutional or public. It also accounts for 41% of nitrogen oxide emissions.

I need not get into what air pollution means in terms of health problems, heart disease and respiratory diseases. We need not get into details, with the striking examples we find in our hospitals. In some of our communities, air pollution has caused all sorts of problems that have forced thousands of people to visit the hospital for heart or respiratory conditions.

The more we can purify our fuel through oxygenation, the less polluted the air will be. In fact, certain countries have experimented with unrefined fuels; one of these countries is Brazil, where 3.6 million vehicles run on ethanol made from sugar cane bagasse. There are 3.6 million vehicles running on pure ethanol.

Japan passed legislation to make the addition of 10% ethanol mandatory. Japan figured that, once the legislation is in force in a few years, air pollution will be reduced by 1% in relation to its Kyoto target, which is 6%. The use of fuel made purer by the addition of 10% ethanol will account for a 1% reduction in pollution.

● (1830)

[English]

In general, ethanol represents 40% to 80% less carbon dioxide than conventional gasoline. Since 1990 the United States has made huge efforts, compared to ours here, to produce ethanol fuel. The United States consumes seven billion litres of ethanol annually. In the year 2000, 28 U.S. states legislated oxygenation of their gasoline.

I modelled my bill on the Minnesota model. Minnesota legislated oxygenation of its fuel in 1997. Since then, because of the Minnesota law, 10 ethanol plants have been created. Minnesota now uses 869 million litres of ethanol per year. In Chicago, only oxygenated gasoline, called oxy-fuel, is available for sale. The Chicago area uses 225 billion litres of ethanol a year.

Here in Canada we are really almost at the stage of infancy in regard to our production of ethanol. It must be admitted that the federal government has undergone certain programs with the

provinces of Canada to arrive at various reductions of air pollutant components such as sulphurs and carbon dioxide in the climate change program, et cetera. It has also agreed under the climate change program to arrive at a level of 35% ethanol by 2010, representing 500 million litres of gasoline.

My bill will only accelerate the climate change program and the measures already taken by the government to purify our gasoline. Right now what we use in our gasoline as an additive is MMT, which is manganese based. By using oxygenation in our fuel and substituting ethanol in our gasoline, not only would we reduce pollution, we would improve the octane of cars and make our cars more efficient. We would ensure a direct benefit to our environment and reduce air pollution and disease and all the various effects of a constant pollution represented by our transportation.

I do not know if the rules applied when I produced the bill before the committee. Sadly, my bill will not be votable and I deplore this. I am grateful that the system has now been changed. I have been in the House for 10 years. I have produced several bills before the private members' bills committee. Twice my name has come up in the draw and twice my bills have been judged not votable, and I deplore it completely. When it is a measure which is of public interest, which will improve the environment and the health of Canadians at large, I find it very sad that due to a system that is so arbitrary my bill today will consist of a discussion for an hour and then die on the Order Paper.

● (1835)

I hope that the House will consider giving me consent to make the bill votable, because I would like it to be judged by my peers.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to make the item votable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in the debate on Bill C-235.

Philosophically I do not have a lot of problems with what the bill is proposing. It is fancied up a little in the sense that it proposes oxygenating fuel, which is just another way of saying blending ethanol with gasoline, and for the government to promote or to legislate the mandatory use of ethanol in gasoline. I do not think that is necessarily a bad thing.

Private Members' Business

What it boils down to is whether the taxpayers and the drivers of automobiles in this country are willing to pay the costs to make that process economically viable. From all indications I have seen, especially over the last year with gasoline prices, the public seems to be extremely sensitive to gasoline prices and I really doubt that they are willing to spend the kind of money to fill the tanks in their cars that would be required to produce a viable ethanol industry.

Quite frankly, the ethanol industry could not survive in Canada without the excise tax subsidy that it enjoys today. Even with that subsidy it is only marginally viable and is very dependent on the cost of the feed stock going into the ethanol plant, whether that be grain, fibre or crop residue of some kind.

Unless the plant can access those feed stocks at an extremely low price, the plant just cannot be economical. Certainly with crop residues on the prairies, we are looking at \$70 or \$80 a tonne for residue straw from the crop. Iogen Corporation, the pilot project right here in Ottawa that is making ethanol out of grain straw, certainly cannot pay that kind of money and it has been very upfront about that.

The proposal to have governments legislate or mandate whatever that level of ethanol would be is really not possible until there is the amount of ethanol produced in this country to make it possible. That would be a huge amount of ethanol and that will only happen when the economics are right and plants can produce the ethanol and make a dollar at it and I think we are a way from that.

There are other problems with the ethanol industry that bear looking at. The member is quite right in saying that there is some reduction in tailpipe emissions in pollution over pure gasoline to gasoline that is blended with ethanol. At a 10% blend that gain is relatively small. If one looks at the complete cycle in the production of ethanol as well as tailpipe emissions, the gain for the environment is relatively small.

There are some real problems to overcome in the industry before the member's idea could really become a reality. There are certainly other technologies on the way that are equally as attractive as ethanol. Perhaps the economics may turn out to be better as well. In the full life cycle, the amount of energy it takes to produce a litre of ethanol has to be taken into account when looking at the savings for the environment or for human health.

● (1840)

Ethanol is a difficult product to blend with gasoline. Where gasoline generally can be moved all across the country through pipelines at a relatively small cost, that is not the case with ethanol. The alcohol, which ethanol essentially is, has a tendency to separate from the gasoline in the pipeline and does not make transportation by pipeline possible. Therefore it requires that the ethanol be trucked from the point of production to the point of sale. Again, we have to figure in the pollution caused by the trucking of the ethanol versus transporting ethanol by pipeline.

There is another big issue. If governments are going to consider mandating or legislating a minimum amount of ethanol blend in gasoline, governments will have to look at the whole issue of government taxation on gasoline, whether that be blended gasoline or straight fossil fuel gasoline.

Last summer government taxation on gasoline was a big issue across the country. Even some service stations now are advertising their tax exempt price on gasoline and then adding the tax on at the till. People are absolutely shocked to find, depending on where the price of gas is, that almost half the price of a litre of gasoline is tax.

If the government is going to be serious about this issue and promotes the use of ethanol without those dreaded subsidies which the member presenting the bill continuously talks about in the fossil fuel industry, if we are going to produce a viable industry that can stand on its own without subsidization, then we have to look at how that product is taxed at the pump.

That is where we could make the product more attractive. It could be made attractive enough to consumers so that they would be willing to use the blended gasoline rather than straight gasoline. We have not seen any willingness on the part of government to reduce taxes on gasoline. In fact the opposite has probably been true rather than a willingness to reduce taxes.

I receive letters in my office all the time from constituents and people across the country who have discovered that as the cost of gasoline rises, the amount of tax on the gasoline also rises. The GST is based on a percentage and it is added on after the provincial and federal excise taxes. It is a tax on a tax. Most consumers find that very offensive. The government has to do something about that if it is going to be serious about promoting this new kind of fuel.

As I said before, there are other technologies that are as attractive or more attractive than ethanol. Biodiesel and even the diesel technologies that exist in Europe are so far ahead of where we are in North America. There is a huge potential for them as a bridge between gasoline and diesel into the new technologies of hydrogen that are around the corner in this country. We could make huge gains and huge improvements in pollution levels with biodiesel. The technology to capture the particulate exhaust from diesel trucks is there now. We could take huge advantage of that and I think the economics are more realistic.

The other one is hydrogen and the hydrogen fuel cell car. The technology is certainly there. We just have to figure out a way to produce and store the hydrogen and to put it into the tank so that it is safe to transport in a car or truck. That technology is virtually pollution free, producing nothing but pure drinking water out the tailpipe.

● (1845)

The bill has its merits and its idea is laudable, to reduce pollution and improve human health. However, I think there are other technologies that we should look at.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to take part in this debate on a bill moved by my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis, namely Bill C-235, An Act to protect human health and the environment by oxygenating automotive fuels.

Private Members' Business

First, I join my colleague in bemoaning the fact that the committee in charge of making bills votable would not allow the House not only to debate this substantive issue, but also to vote on it.

This is a technical bill. I believe we have the right these days, as a Parliament, not only to vote on some motions, but also to make commitments and real decisions especially with regard to issues related to the environment and sustainable development and to making sustainable development viable for future generations.

I will specifically draw the attention of the House to clause 4 of the bill, which deals with the prohibition of the use and sale of certain gasoline and diesel fuel. It says:

Despite any other Act of Parliament or any regulation under an Act of Parliament, no person shall produce or import for use or sale in Canada or sell or offer for sale in Canada any gasoline or diesel fuel that has an oxygen content of less than 2.7% by weight.

Before tackling the issue of oxygenating automobile fuels, I believe it is important to see where we are at today with regard to additives. Indirectly, this bill is aimed at making sure that some additives such as MMT are used less frequently or even banned. Since the fuel additive MMT has major impacts on public health and the environment I believe it is important to talk about it.

I would remind the House that a 1996 study concluded that the use of this additive in gasoline had the effect of clogging anti-pollution devices, which led to increased pollution of the environment. It was estimated that compared to low-emission vehicles using MMT-free gas, a vehicle using gas containing MMT, after 160,000 kilometres, presented the following characteristics: hydrocarbon emissions were 31% higher when a vehicle used gas with additives like MMT; nitrogen oxide emissions were 24 times higher; carbon monoxide emissions were 14 times higher; emissions of carbon dioxide, or CO₂, a greenhouse gas, were 2% higher; and finally, fuel efficiency was reduced by 2%.

This demonstrates that the gas used by vehicles is as important as how the vehicles themselves are made. Automobile manufacturers can go ahead and come up with new standards, like ultra-low emissions standards, but if the gas being used is not good enough, the situation is not any better. It is no good having a vehicle described by the manufacturer as an ultra-low emissions vehicle; if the gas being used is not good enough, pollution will not be reduced.

• (1850)

In my mind, that is why we need to legislate. In order to ban MMT, the Americans, among others, used two strategies: one was to magnify the refining process through the increase of aromatic elements or the increase in percentage of branched-chain hydrocarbons. The other strategy was to use oxygenated gasoline.

We are wrong to think that ethanol is the only oxygenated gasoline. Methanol is one, as well as MTBE.

Therefore, two strategies can be used, but the one recommended by the hon. member is totally acceptable.

This bill then should be seen as an enhancement. I agree with the member from the Alliance who said that there are other ways besides the use of the electric car, for instance. The hydrogen car can also be used and might be an option. Let us keep in mind that this bill does

not deal with car manufacturing, but rather with the use of gasoline and its constituents.

So, since studies have shown the impact that some additives can have, it would be, I think, in our interest to develop new oxygenation standards and new prescribed standards.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I support this bill, although it is unfortunate that the House will not get to vote on this piece of legislation. Lastly, I want to point out that I support the bill brought forward by my colleague, and I urge all members to do the same.

• (1855)

[English]

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the motivations of my colleague in bringing forward a bill that aims at improving the environmental performance of vehicles through more environmentally acceptable fuels. However, while the government supports the objectives, it does not support the specifics of Bill C-235 to require oxygenates in all Canadian gasoline and diesel fuel within the context, chronology and framework that the member's bill has presented.

Oxygenates are added to fuels to improve combustion and, therefore, decrease carbon monoxide tailpipe emissions, which has environmental merit. Oxygenates that are blended into gasoline include ethanol and methyl tertiary butyl ether, MTBE.

Ethanol is a renewable fuel that reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Under our climate change plan the government has targeted increased use of ethanol in Canadian fuels. Ethanol produced from cellulose has the largest greenhouse gas benefits. However, the technology to produce ethanol from cellulose is still being developed.

Although methyl tertiary butyl ether, MTBE, is presently being used in Canada, it has been the oxygenate of choice in the United States where oxygenates were mandated. As members may know, MTBE has caused groundwater contamination south of the border as has been pointed out. We want to prevent this from becoming a problem here in Canada.

The transportation sector is a major source of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants in Canada.

As part of a balanced approach addressing vehicle and fuel technology, behaviour change and infrastructure, we need to increase the supply and use of less carbon intensive fuels like ethanol and biodiesel. Increased use of biomass ethanol and biodiesel will not only reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, but will also stimulate innovative Canadian companies already active in the bioeconomy and stimulate potential new income sources for farmers and other sectors.

Private Members' Business

In co-operation with provincial governments, the Government of Canada has been delivering a comprehensive and stringent program for cleaner vehicles and fuels to reduce harmful emissions from vehicles since 1994. We have in place today a 10 year regulatory road map for cleaner fuels and vehicles that will give Canadians cleaner air to breathe and better protect their health from airborne pollutants.

Never before has the government produced such an agenda for action for a product that all Canadians use. Our 10 year plan of action contains stringent new low emission standards for passenger cars, light duty trucks, sport utility vehicles and new standards for the fuels that power them. With this package, nitrogen oxide emissions, a key ingredient of smog, will be reduced by 90% for the vehicles built in 2004 and beyond.

We are also dealing with the fuels that power these vehicles. In June 1999 the government put regulations in place controlling the sulphur content of gasoline to an average limit of 30 parts per million starting January 1, 2005. The interim requirements for less sulphur in gasoline came into effect this past summer. Also in July the government put in place regulations limiting the sulphur content of diesel fuel to 15 parts per million by 2006. These measures will significantly reduce emissions of harmful substances from the transportation sector.

It is understood that a major tenet of the bill is support for oxygenated fuels, such as ethanol. The government continues to support the use of ethanol through a waiver of the federal excise tax on ethanol used as a fuel and through continued research into the production of ethanol from cellulose and through promotion of the environmental benefits of ethanol.

Action Plan 2000, the Canadian government's response to climate change to meet the Kyoto goal, includes five transportation initiatives, two of which are fuel related. As part of Action Plan 2000, the aim is to increase ethanol production in Canada by 750 million litres per year over the next five years. In effect, this will quadruple the production of ethanol in Canada. When fully implemented this will be equivalent to 25% of Canada's total gasoline supply containing a 10% ethanol blend.

• (1900)

The climate change plan for Canada further commits the government to working with the provinces, territories and stakeholders to increase this target to 35% by 2010. It also indicates that the government is looking at alternatives, such as a standard for a certain percentage of fuel to be greenhouse gas free, which would encourage the development of cellulosic ethanol.

To further encourage the development of biodiesel, the plan proposes that federal, provincial and territorial governments collaborate on how to reach a target of 500 million litres of biodiesel production by 2010 using a variety of tools including incentives, standards and research and development.

An important policy to encourage the use of ethanol is its tax treatment as compared to gasoline. We currently waive the excise tax on the ethanol portion of gasoline to make ethanol blended gasoline more attractive to consumers. The federal budget 2003 extends federal support for ethanol by proposing that the ethanol or methanol

portion of blended diesel fuel also be exempted from the federal excise tax on diesel fuel. In addition, it proposes that biodiesel, which is produced from biomass or renewable feedstocks, be exempted from the federal excise tax on diesel fuel when used as a motive fuel or blended with regular diesel fuel.

The government recognizes the key role of provinces, territories and industry in expanding the ethanol markets in Canada. We will negotiate with provinces and territories a national framework for the production and use of ethanol, with voluntary agreements on regional targets.

The Government of Canada will also work with provinces and industry to enable the development and commercialization of high performing technologies such as cellulose-based ethanol.

These actions are in keeping with the government's desire to see the use of clean, renewable fuel expand and thrive in a context for which has been well prepared.

The government has also signaled through its climate change plan that it will work with the auto industry to improve by 25% fleet fuel efficiency by the year 2010. More fuel efficient vehicles save the environment, protect our health and save us money.

The 10 year plan is a major step forward in bringing cleaner air to Canadians but our job is far from finished. We want to engage more Canadians in direct actions they can take and also to empower them to hold governments accountable to meet clean air commitments.

The 10 year plan for cleaner vehicles and fuels is yet another step along the road to cleaner air and healthier Canadians.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the usual refrain. It is the second time I have presented a bill about oxygenation of gasoline. The government always congratulates me and tells me what a wonderful measure it is but decides against it.

What I would point out to the government is that by 2010, when the federal program, which is not legislated, by the way, will come into force, we will be producing 500 million litres of ethanol blend gasoline. What I will explain to the parliamentary secretary, who pointed out MTBE, is that I am not talking about MTBE. I am just saying that this bill was based on the Minnesota model, which in four years has produced 869 million litres of oxygenated gasoline through ethanol. That is in four years only.

Now in 2003, the United States produces 7 billion litres of ethanol; that is since 1990. It has 1.3 million Ford cars with 85% ethanol blend, while we only have 26 in Canada. Legislation in 28 states in the United States has proven that legislation pushes forward the agenda.

I agree that my timetable might have been short and I would have been quite prepared to change it if the bill had been made votable. I listened to my colleague from the Canadian Alliance who said that it was not very significant anyway. I will just tell him that Japan has legislated 10% ethanol blend gasoline by 2008 and it will reduce its target.

An hon. member: They had to legislate it.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, would the member allow me to speak, please? If he wanted to intervene, he had time to intervene. He did not choose to, so I do not want to be interrupted by him with all his little interruptions. I want to speak for myself. If he wanted to speak, he had time to speak. If he did not choose to speak then he should keep quiet.

By 2008 Japan will be producing enough ethanol blend gasoline to reduce its Kyoto target of 6% by fully 1%. Perhaps as well the member did not read the bill, because it does include bio-diesel fuels. We are talking about oxygenation of diesel fuel and of gasoline fuels. As I said, oxygenation has been the route taken by 28 states in the United States.

When we talk about all the wonderful things we are going to do by 2010, I would remind the parliamentary secretary that today Scania buses are running with 100% ethanol blend gasoline in Sweden, but here we only have a few cars. I have met Swedish people who are using 85% blend ethanol cars.

I am not a proponent of ethanol necessarily, but at the same time I know, because the parliamentary secretary has quoted Iogen, that the Iogen people have been among the greatest proponents of this bill for cellulose ethanol to put in gasoline.

As far as the prices go, whenever I can, I buy ethanol blend gasoline. It is highly competitive thanks to the 10¢ excise tax rebate. However, I would point out that the United States offers a 23¢ per litre excise tax rebate, instead of 10¢ as we do here, to promote the ethanol industry. Certainly by all standards, if we compare the oxygenation of gas through ethanol or methanol with MMT, which we use today, there is just no comparison. MMT is one of the worst pollutants. It is produced on a base of manganese and it is about time we started to get rid of it.

I am very sorry that in our crazy system we will not have a chance to at least vote on my bill. I regret that one of my colleagues refused the consent motion, because the new rules now would have permitted my bill to go through and to be voted on by my peers, which is really what any parliamentarian wants.

●(1905)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business is now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

●(1910)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: The House will suspend to the call of the Chair giving time to the member who is participating in the adjournment proceedings to arrive in the chamber because the

Adjournment Debate

private members' business items we have had today have concluded earlier than scheduled.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 7:10 p.m.)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 7:11 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to address a matter that I brought up previously in a question directed to the justice minister.

Specifically, I want to know why the government is pursuing a two tier justice system. I am referring specifically to section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code which instructs judges to give lenient sentences to Indian criminals.

The question I asked of the minister indicated that Statistics Canada reveals that the crime rate for Indians compared to non-Indians in Saskatoon is ten and a half times to one and it is twelve times to one in Regina. There are three bills currently before Parliament under the purview of the Indian affairs department, none of which address this problem.

In response to my question as to why the minister would be opposed to restoring our justice system to one based on equality where all criminals are treated the same regardless of race or ethnicity, he really did not answer the question.

I would like to know why it is that the government is refusing to address the problem.

The minister in his response acknowledged that there is a problem and said that he was working with the province to resolve it.

My point is that surely to goodness the solution to the problem of a crime rate of one racial group versus all other racial groups combined being ten and a half to one in the city that I come from, giving Indian criminals lenient sentences is no way to address that problem.

I think that section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code should be repealed and that the Liberal government should take a different view of criminal justice reform. Instead of making excuses for why particular groups have different crime rates, we should simply take the view that we have a common law that applies to everyone, that one set of rules fits all and if one breaks the law, then one will suffer the consequences regardless.

Adjournment Debate

I would like to point out as well to the hon. member who will be responding on behalf of the government that not only is it basically a racist government policy for the Criminal Code to treat people differently based on their race or to treat criminals differently, but it is a real insult to victims of crime that someone would get a get out of jail free card because of their race.

An editorial that appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on April 4, 2002 stated that Parliament should repeal differential sentencing, the Supreme Court should return to first principles, offenders should be sentenced in proportion to the severity of the offence, with a view to ensuring parity in punishment, and everyone should be equal before the law.

An editorial in the *National Post* on June 28, 1999 stated that criminals should not be sentenced on the basis of statistics or skin colour, nor is the criminal justice system biased against natives. It stated that natives may suffer a higher rate of incarceration but they also commit disproportionately more crime than all other ethnic groups. It also stated that dealing natives what are effectively get out of jail free cards merely lowers the cost of going to prison for native criminals.

I await the reply.

● (1915)

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt for the opportunity to answer his question.

The government is a strong supporter of equality and fairness for all Canadians. For the first time, Parliament set out the purpose and principles of sentencing in 1996.

One of the new principles found in section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code is that all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders with particular attention to the circumstances of aboriginal offenders.

The need to consider restraint has been given increased importance as a result of Canada's high rate of incarceration when compared with many other industrialized nations and especially among aboriginal Canadians.

While codified for the first time in Bill C-41 in 1996, the idea of encouraging restraint in the use of incarceration is not new. A white paper was published under the authority of the Minister of Justice in 1982. It stated that restraint in the use of imprisonment have been endorsed by numerous other commissions and in various law reform reports.

There is a longstanding concern by this government and the Parliament of Canada with the overrepresentation of aboriginal people in the criminal justice system who are overrepresented in virtually all aspects, not just with respect to crime rates. Rates of offending, charging, incarceration and victimization are higher for them than for the non-aboriginal population. However the causes of this overrepresentation involve complex social and economic factors of poverty, addictions and disadvantage. They are also historical and not easily dealt with.

The purpose of including a specific reference to aboriginal offenders in the Criminal Code, 1996 and more recently in the Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2002 was to signal Parliament's concern over the especially high aboriginal incarceration rate and the socio-economic factors that contribute to this. It was to require sentencing judges to be sensitive to these matters. It was also for judges to consider the appropriate use of alternative sentencing processes including restorative, culturally sensitive approaches such as sentencing circles, healing circles and victim-offenders mediation.

In the process leading up to the passage of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in February 2002, Parliament carefully considered and agreed that young persons should have the benefit of subsection 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code that applies to aboriginal adults. The Senate refused to pass the Youth Criminal Justice Act without a similar provision for aboriginal young persons. The Minister of Justice agreed with the amendment.

After debate in the House, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, including the amendment, was passed. It should be noted that these provisions do not necessarily mean lighter sentencing. Sometimes being dealt with by a restorative justice program may even be more difficult, not just for the offender but also for the victim, family members and other community members.

● (1920)

The government is also focusing on programs that address the whole continuum of crime and aboriginal peoples so that long term changes will result, for example, funding of programs for aboriginal peoples through the national crime prevention program, the aboriginal justice strategy, the native court worker program, and youth justice. The government is committed to working with aboriginal peoples to ensure that changes result.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that socio-economic factors contribute to the disproportionate crime rate among Indians versus non-Indians.

There is no doubt that is true, so why would the government not resolve those socio-economic problems? Why does it continue to give special race based privileges to Indians, such as tax exemptions and special hiring quotas? Why does it racially segregate Indians and have a reserve system so that Indians themselves are prevented from becoming full and equal participants in society with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else? It should stop racially segregated and race based government policies. That would address some of the socio-economic conditions.

She also said that the government is committed to equality and fairness for all Canadians. In fact, nothing is further from the truth. It has even ingrained it in law so that the law would treat criminals different depending on their race. That is not equality. That is not fairness. That is an insult to victims of crime. That is entrenched, institutionalized racism.

Adjournment Debate

In conclusion, I sent a brochure into my riding and other parts of Saskatchewan asking the following questions: Should Indians convicted of a criminal offence receive the same jail sentences as non-Indians? Should the Criminal Code be restored to one that ensures that all Canadians are treated equally regardless of race? The response to both questions was: 97% said yes. My constituents believe in equality, that everyone should be treated equally, and that we should have equality of opportunity. The government is completely out of step and out of touch with reality.

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard: Mr. Speaker, the remarks of my colleague do not impress me. This is why the Liberal government is

on this side of the House and has been in power for a long time. My colleague is implying that Canadians do not believe in special treatment for aboriginals. We on this side of the House believe that we should care for aboriginals. He does not; we do.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday, April 7, at 11 a.m. pursuant to the order made on Thursday, March 27, 2003.

(The House adjourned at 7:23 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Points of Order

Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.

Mr. Loubier.....	5067
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre).....	5067
Mr. Boudria.....	5068
Mr. Chatters.....	5069
Mr. Reynolds.....	5069

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Regan.....	5070
----------------	------

Terrorism

Mr. Easter.....	5070
Mr. Sorenson.....	5071
Mr. Lanctôt.....	5071
Mr. Comartin.....	5072
Mr. Hearn.....	5072

Interparliamentary Delegations

Mr. Patry.....	5072
----------------	------

Committees of the House

Library of Parliament

Ms. Bennett.....	5072
------------------	------

Petitions

Religious Freedom

Mr. Stinson.....	5073
------------------	------

Coast Guard

Mr. Lunn.....	5073
---------------	------

Justice

Mr. Lunn.....	5073
---------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Regan.....	5073
----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Situation in Iraq

Mr. Harper.....	5073
Motion.....	5073
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River).....	5074
Mr. Epp.....	5076
Mr. Manley.....	5076
Mr. Anders.....	5078
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	5079
Mr. Comartin.....	5079
Mr. Strahl.....	5079
Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean).....	5080
Mr. Rocheleau.....	5081
Ms. McDonough.....	5082
Mr. Johnston.....	5084
Motion.....	5084

(Motion agreed to).....	5085
Mr. Strahl.....	5085
Ms. Carroll.....	5086
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	5086
Mr. Harvard.....	5087
Mr. Hearn.....	5088
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford).....	5089
Mr. Chatters.....	5090
Mr. Stinson.....	5090
Mr. Benoit.....	5091
Ms. Carroll.....	5092
Mr. Stinson.....	5092
Ms. Carroll.....	5093
Mr. Mahoney.....	5094
Mr. Benoit.....	5095

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Environment

Mr. Eyking.....	5096
-----------------	------

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries

Mr. Chatters.....	5096
-------------------	------

Juno Awards

Mr. Regan.....	5096
----------------	------

Pita Aatami

Mr. St-Julien.....	5097
--------------------	------

Juno Awards

Mr. Bellemare.....	5097
--------------------	------

Parthenon Marbles

Mr. Abbott.....	5097
-----------------	------

National Post Editorial

Mr. Mahoney.....	5097
------------------	------

Daffodil Month

Mr. Ménard.....	5097
-----------------	------

Joseph Kobolak

Mr. Tirabassi.....	5098
--------------------	------

Iraq

Mr. Hill (MacLeod).....	5098
-------------------------	------

National Post Editorial

Mr. Farrah.....	5098
-----------------	------

Aboriginal Affairs

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis.....	5098
-------------------------	------

First Nations

Mr. Loubier.....	5099
------------------	------

Peter Nygard

Ms. Sgro.....	5099
---------------	------

Firearms Registry

Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest).....	5099
---	------

Canadian Alliance	
Mr. Pankiw	5099
Le Salon du livre de l'Outaouais	
Mr. Proulx	5099
Anti-War Protestors	
Mr. Kenney	5099

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Iraq	
Mr. Harper	5100
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5100
Mr. Harper	5100
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5100
Mr. Harper	5100
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5100

Member for LaSalle—Émard	
Mr. Strahl	5100
Mr. Manley	5100
Mr. Strahl	5100
Mr. Manley	5101

Iraq	
Mr. Duceppe	5101
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5101
Mr. Duceppe	5101
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5101
Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean)	5101
Mr. Manley	5101
Mr. Bachand (Saint-Jean)	5101
Mr. Manley	5101
Mr. Blaikie	5101
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5101

Taxation	
Mr. Blaikie	5102
Mr. Manley	5102

Member for LaSalle—Émard	
Mr. Clark	5102
Mr. Manley	5102
Mr. Clark	5102
Mr. Collenette	5102

Iraq	
Miss Grey	5102
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5102
Miss Grey	5102
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5102
Ms. Gagnon (Québec)	5102
Mr. Manley	5103
Ms. Gagnon (Québec)	5103
Mr. Manley	5103

Health	
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	5103
Ms. McLellan	5103
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	5103
Ms. McLellan	5103

Guaranteed Income Supplement	
Mr. Gagnon (Champlain)	5103
Mrs. Stewart	5103
Mr. Gagnon (Champlain)	5103
Mrs. Stewart	5103

Citizenship and Immigration	
Mrs. Ablonczy	5104
Mr. Coderre	5104
Mrs. Ablonczy	5104
Mr. Coderre	5104

National Defence	
Mr. Jordan	5104
Mr. McCallum (Markham)	5104

Iraq	
Ms. McDonough	5104
Ms. Carroll	5104

Health	
Ms. Wasylcia-Leis	5104
Ms. McLellan	5104

Member for LaSalle—Émard	
Mr. Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	5105
Mr. Manley	5105
Mr. Clark	5105
Mr. Manley	5105

Canada-U.S. Relations	
Mr. Kenney	5105
Mr. Manley	5105
Mr. Kenney	5105
Mr. Manley	5105

Dairy Producers	
Ms. Picard	5105
Mr. Vanclief	5106
Ms. Picard	5106
Mr. Vanclief	5106

Canada Elections Act	
Mr. Reynolds	5106
Mr. Boudria	5106
Mr. Reynolds	5106
Mr. Boudria	5106

Natural Resources	
Mr. Godfrey	5106
Mr. Dhaliwal	5106

Agriculture	
Mr. Casson	5106
Mr. Pettigrew	5107
Mr. Casson	5107
Mr. Pettigrew	5107

Official Languages	
Mr. Sauvageau	5107
Ms. Robillard	5107

Perth—Middlesex	
Mrs. Gallant	5107
Mr. Boudria	5107

Chambord Plant	
Ms. Girard-Bujold	5107
Mr. Drouin (Beauce)	5107
Infrastructure	
Mr. Comartin	5107
Mr. Mitchell	5108
Taxation	
Mr. Clark	5108
Mr. Manley	5108
Business of the House	
Mr. Reynolds	5108
Mr. Boudria	5108

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply	
Allotted Day—Situation in Iraq	
Motion	5108
Mr. Reynolds	5108
Mr. Moore	5110
Mr. Szabo	5110
Ms. McDonough	5111
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	5111
Mr. Szabo	5112
Ms. McDonough	5112
Mr. LeBlanc	5113
Mr. Stinson	5114
Ms. Carroll	5114
Mr. Szabo	5114
Mr. Stinson	5116
Mr. Lunn	5116
Mr. Kenney	5116
Mr. Tonks	5118
Mr. Lunn	5118
Mr. Harvey	5119
Mr. Bergeron	5120
Mr. Cotler	5121

Ms. Carroll	5123
Mr. Duncan	5124
Mr. Stinson	5125
Mr. Strahl	5126
Division deemed demanded and deferred	5127

Message from the Senate

The Deputy Speaker	5127
--------------------------	------

ROYAL ASSENT

The Deputy Speaker	5127
--------------------------	------

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Free Trade Agreements

Mr. Paquette	5128
Mr. Calder	5130
Mr. Duncan	5131
Ms. McDonough	5132
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	5133
Mr. Lincoln	5134

Automotive Pollution Reduction Act

Mr. Lincoln	5135
Bill C-235. Second reading	5135
Mr. Chatters	5135
Mr. Bigras	5136
Mr. Tonks	5137
Mr. Lincoln	5138

Suspension of Sitting

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 7:10 p.m.) ..	5139
--	------

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Sitting Resumed

(The House resumed at 7:11 p.m.)	5139
--	------

Aboriginal Affairs

Mr. Pankiw	5139
Ms. Allard	5140

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