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Monday, March 24, 2003

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 24, 2003

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 81(14), it is my duty to inform the House of the motion to be addressed Tuesday in studying the business of supply.

[*English*]

The motion reads as follows:

That, as this House supported the reduction of funds for the firearms program in the Supplementary Estimates of December 5, 2002, this House should continue to support the reduction of funds for the firearms program in this supply period and subsequent supply periods until the government can provide a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis for the program and provide an accurate total of expenditures to date and a realistic estimate of future costs of implementing the Firearms Act including the total cost:

- to fully enforce the Firearms Act;
- to verify the 5 million unverified firearms in the registry;
- to verify and correct the information in the 4 million records in the Firearms Interest Police database and to bring it into full compliance with the Privacy Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- to register the 10 million unregistered guns in Canada;
- to license the half million unlicensed gun owners in Canada; and
- to the economy and jobs.

This motion, standing in the name of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, is not votable. Copies of the motion are available at the table.

It being 11:05 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS ACT

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-205, An act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act

(disallowance procedure for statutory instruments), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-205, an act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act, is designed to provide a statutory basis for the current disallowance procedure and to extend the application of that procedure to regulations made by persons or bodies, other than the governor in council or ministers of the Crown. The bill is consistent with recommendations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations for the reform of the current disallowance procedure.

One aspect of the current disallowance procedure that has long been identified as problematic by advocates of better parliamentary control of delegated legislation is that it limits the possibility of disallowance to those statutory instruments that are made by the governor in council or by ministers of the Crown.

As a result, the considerable body of delegated legislation promulgated, for example, by the CRTC, the Canadian Transportation Agency or the National Energy Board is not subject to the disallowance procedure provided for in the Standing Orders. This is a consequence of the choice made in 1986 to implement the new disallowance procedures by means of amendments to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons rather than legislation.

In any event, it is clearly both logical and desirable that all statutory instruments subject to review by Parliament under the Statutory Instruments Act be subject to disallowance. There is no reason, either in theory or in practice, why a regulation made by the governor in council or a minister can be disallowed by Parliament while a regulation made by some other delegate of Parliament cannot.

The effectiveness of the current procedure also relies on the cooperation of the governor in council or the minister concerned to carry out a disallowance after it has been ordered by the House of Commons. In itself, an order of the House of Commons cannot affect the revocation of a regulation. The authority that made a disallowed regulation must still formally intervene in order to revoke that regulation following the making of a disallowance order. Putting the disallowance procedure on a statutory footing will allow Parliament to enact that a disallowed regulation will be deemed to be revoked and thereby streamline the disallowance procedure as well as improve its effectiveness.

Private Members' Business

On reviewing some of the interventions that have been made against this bill or its predecessor in the last session, Bill C-202, one is struck by the fact that many of the arguments put forward do not go to the principle of the bill, but focus on alleged perceived practical difficulties with the bill as it stands. In many instances these difficulties are more apparent than real. In any event, the objections that have been raised could easily be dealt with, if warranted, by means of amendments to the bill in committee.

We have heard a curious claim that for the Parliament of Canada to enact a statutory disallowance procedure might be incompatible with the principle of responsible government.

The reality is that the procedure laid out in Bill C-205 is entirely consistent with, and in fact promotes, responsible government by increasing the accountability of the executive branch to Parliament.

There are at least 12 parliaments in the Commonwealth, including provincial legislatures, that have adopted a statutory disallowance procedure. I believe no one would seriously suggest that these jurisdictions have turned their back on the principle of responsible government.

In addition, the Parliament of Canada has itself previously enacted a negative resolution procedure in some of its statutes. If the argument that was made was correct, those who are making it would have to conclude that the federal Parliament has already abandoned the principle of responsible government. Of course, this conclusion is absurd.

The purpose of Bill C-205 is to expand the scope of the current disallowance procedure so as to allow parliamentarians to exercise the same control over the making of regulations by all its delegates that it already exercises over the making of regulations by the governor in council or by a minister.

At present, regulations made by persons or bodies other than the governor in council or a minister are subject to parliamentary scrutiny by the Houses, acting through the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, but the Houses are powerless to control these regulations through disallowance. This is an anomaly that needs to be corrected.

An attempt has been made to present the correction of this anomaly as involving an unwarranted parliamentary intrusion in the affairs of regulation makers. For example, in her intervention the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General drew attention to the fact that rules made by the courts—one of the three pillars of a democratic society—would fall under and be captured by Bill C-205. She then asked: “What about the separation of the judiciary and the government?”

• (1110)

Court rules made under statutory authority come within the scope of Bill C-205 because they are delegated legislation, just as they come within the scope of the existing Statutory Instruments Act because they are delegated legislation.

Bill C-205 is a bill to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and, as such, the provisions of the bill reflect the structure and organization of the statute it amends. If the possible application of the disallowance procedure to rules of procedure is problematic, it is

the Statutory Instruments Act that should be amended to exclude court rules from the definition of “statutory instrument”. This is not something that is within the scope of Bill C-205.

While making that argument, the parliamentary secretary was probably not aware that in its 10th report of the second session of the 33rd Parliament, 1988, the scrutiny committee informed both Houses that it would not scrutinize the rules of procedure made by courts intended to have the same degree of independence as that guaranteed by the Constitution to superior courts. The committee took that decision nearly 15 years ago out of its sensitivity to the principle of the independence of the judiciary.

Given that court rules are also subject to examination by Department of Justice employees under the Statutory Instruments Act, it is the subjection of those rules to the control of the Department of Justice employee that might properly be said to breach the “separation of the judiciary and the government”. In these circumstances, any concern about the separation of the judiciary and the government might be better directed to the current practice of the government than with regard to the parliamentary procedure proposed in Bill C-205.

It is interesting to note that on more than one occasion the House has been assured that the disallowance procedures of the Standing Orders process have worked well. If anything, this should be an argument in favour of adopting Bill C-205, but more fundamental, those who use this argument to justify the status quo are overlooking the fact that the statutory disallowance procedure proposed in Bill C-205 is not put forward because the current procedure has not worked. It is put forward because it is necessary to adopt legislation to expand the scope of parliamentary control of delegated legislation to include all instruments that are now subject to parliamentary scrutiny. As has been said by others, this purpose simply cannot be achieved by the standing orders and requires a legislative approach.

Thirty years after the enactment of the Statutory Instruments Act the benefits that have accrued from our scrutiny of delegated legislation are indisputable. Effective parliamentary scrutiny, however, requires effective parliamentary control. A step in the right direction was taken in 1986 and I believe the time has come to complete the process and to eliminate the gap that now exists between scrutiny and control of delegated legislation.

This is what Bill C-205 proposes to do. Full parliamentary control of delegated legislation with such exceptions as are warranted represents a meaningful and significant reduction of the democratic deficit. More than 30 years after the enactment of the Statutory Instruments Act it is believed that the time has come for the Parliament of Canada to give itself the means to ensure full democratic control of federally delegated legislation.

I congratulate my colleague from Surrey who has put forth the legislation. I trust when the House has to vote we will all support it like we should.

Private Members' Business

• (1115)

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-205, an act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act, is intended to provide a statutory basis for our current disallowance procedure and to extend the application of that procedure to regulations made by persons or bodies other than the governor in council or ministers of the crown. This bill is consistent with recommendations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations for the reform of the current disallowance procedure.

Criticism has been levelled about the fact that the revocation of a disallowed regulation 30 days after its disallowance by the House would create a situation in which the government would be deprived of the flexibility it needs to consider the implications of a disallowance. This is a specious argument. Why? Disallowance would almost invariably take place after long and extensive discussions with the responsible department and, in practice, a regulation making authority would have ample time to consider both alternatives to its regulation and the consequence of a repeal.

Second, disallowance will usually only take place after the joint committee has specifically advised the responsible minister it is being considered. Even after a disallowance resolution is tabled in the House, Bill C-205, in keeping with the current procedure, requires that the resolution can only become an order after 15 sitting days. That means the government will always have almost a month in which to decide whether or not it will object to disallowance. In practice, if the House is not sitting, the period will be even greater.

In addition, it is precisely in order to preserve the ability of the government to establish an appropriate alternative temporary regime where one is needed that Bill C-205 suspends the effective date of revocation by 30 days. This is more than what is provided by other disallowance procedures in the Commonwealth.

For example, repeal of the subject regulation is immediate upon adoption of the disallowance motion in the following jurisdictions with such procedures. In the Commonwealth of Australia, New South Wales; Victoria; Queensland; South Australia; Tasmania; Northern Territory; and Western Australia. In New Zealand, it is immediate or on such later date as is specified in the resolution. In our very own province of Quebec, it is immediate or on such later date as is specified in the resolution. In Saskatchewan, the subject regulation is to be repealed or amended by the regulation making authority on receipt of the resolution forwarded by the clerk of the legislative assembly. In Manitoba, the regulation is to be repealed or amended by the regulation making authority in accordance with the resolution of the legislative assembly.

If civil servants in those jurisdictions are capable of providing advice to their ministers with respect to the regulatory measures that are needed following the revocation of a disallowed provision within 15 sitting days, why would this be an insurmountable difficulty for our federal civil servants?

The procedure proposed in Bill C-205 gives a full additional month before the revocation takes place. This feature is unique and provides the federal government and other regulation making authorities with greater flexibility than any other statutory disallowance procedure.

Again, if the government, in any particular case, believes that the standing joint committee failed to take certain factors into account, such as the time required to put in place a replacement regulation, it is free to make that case in the House of Commons and to ask the House not to disallow.

It is also of interest to note that the usual notice and comment period for proposed regulations following pre-publication in part I of the *Canada Gazette* is 30 days. If that is a sufficient period of time for citizens to assess and comment on a proposed regulatory initiative, often involving many pages of regulations, one wonders why a similar period, which is really in addition to the minimum of three weeks provided before a resolution becomes an order of the House, is not sufficient for those advising the government or other regulation making authorities to assess and react appropriately to the disallowance of a regulation.

Are members of the House expected to believe that our public service is incapable of dealing with a proposed revocation within a period of 51 days while it is perfectly possible for their Australian or Quebec counterparts to do so within 21 days?

It should also be noted that the usual procedure in the federal statutes that provide a negative resolution procedure is for the revocation to take effect immediately upon adoption of the resolution in question. The existence of these federal precedents is sufficient to dispose of the claim that Bill C-205 imposes an impractical burden on regulation making authorities.

• (1120)

Here again the fact is that Bill C-205 is more generous in that regard than any previous federal legislation in that it suspends the effect of a disallowance order by a full month following its adoption.

Finally, it has been argued that by leaving in the hands of the government the power to revoke a disallowed regulation, the current procedure provides a fail safe mechanism against a rash or ill-considered disallowance.

The fact is that the procedure proposed in Bill C-205 already provides a mechanism for the reconsideration of a disallowance resolution. Under proposed subclause 19.1(4), any minister may request that a debate take place on a disallowance resolution put forward by the standing joint committee. That mechanism provides the government with an opportunity to make its case to the House of Commons that the revocation of any particular regulation would have unforeseen consequences or create a damaging legal vacuum. If a valid case is made, the House will refuse to approve the disallowance. If the government is unable to make a convincing case then the House will approve the disallowance. Either way, it is the collective judgment of the House of Commons that prevails.

The argument in favour of a statutory disallowance procedure is that the Parliament of Canada is the source of the legislative authority that is exercised, not only by the governor in council and ministers, but also by various other regulation making authorities, such as the CRTC and the Canadian Transportation Agency.

Private Members' Business

Accordingly, Parliament has a valid interest in overseeing the manner in which the legislative powers it has delegated to such bodies and agencies is obvious and has long been recognized in Canadian law. Effective parliamentary scrutiny requires effective parliamentary control. The existing procedure could only deal with a portion of the regulations subject to parliamentary scrutiny, those made by the governor in council or by a minister.

In order for the scope of the disallowance procedure to coincide with the scope of parliamentary scrutiny, Bill C-205 is necessary. There has been much talk lately of a democratic deficit. Full parliamentary control of delegated legislation with such exceptions as are warranted would significantly reduce that deficit. The procedure that is proposed by this bill is one that has been endorsed by parliamentarians of all parties and that has been the subject of unanimous recommendations by various committees of this parliament.

I believe the time has come for Canada to give parliamentarians back the means they require to ensure the accountability of public authorities for their exercise of law making powers given to them by Parliament. Bill C-205 gives us this procedure and I support it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to Bill C-205. It is not a very voluminous bill, being only two pages in length, but it is far more important than its size would indicate, since its purpose is to monitor the application of statutory instruments adopted by the government.

I will explain what I mean by that. Those listening may think it sounds simple for the government to pass legislation and then afterward the related statutory instruments. But what the public does not realize is that those instruments are not passed in this House, in other words are not subject to a vote by members and naturally do not reflect the representativeness of those elected to represent the people here.

That is basically what this bill is intended to do. The Bloc Québécois agrees with this bill, which does not come from a Bloc MP. We agree with it because its objective is to establish a mechanism which would allow the House, once a statutory instrument were adopted by the government, to demand the non-adoption, or disallowance, of a statutory instrument, or a portion thereof.

Thus the deputation in this House would have the opportunity to vote or to oblige the government to explain itself and to submit for approval of the House the text of that regulatory instrument, or a portion thereof.

This is something of great importance, and I will give you an example to show why. I am my party's transport critic and currently a member of the legislative committee examining Bill C-17, the Public Safety Act. I will not go into all the complexities, all the dangers this bill represents for our rights and freedoms. I will limit myself to giving the people of Quebec and of Canada one example from Part 7, which addresses the Explosives Act.

Bill C-17 adds some new offences to the Criminal Code, including a prohibition from knowingly manufacturing in whole or in part an

explosive from an inexplusive ammunition component. This represents the addition of a new offence.

And what do inexplusive ammunition components comprise? Any cartridge case, bullet, or projectile used in a firearm. Thus an additional offence under the Criminal Code is being added in connection with the manufacture of explosives.

Gun owners, hunters and other people came to tell the committee that it made no sense for this bill to prohibit them from making their own ammunition, among other things, when the guns were being used for recreational purposes.

The government is telling all those people who demonstrated their opposition by appearing before the committee that they must wait for the regulations and that, when the regulations come out, individuals whose use is personal will be exempt.

However, when this bill is adopted, the regulations will not be issued. So, obviously, I understand the hunters, recreational gun owners and firing range groups who are saying, "Listen, now you are prohibiting us from doing this, and this is dangerous because we can be considered criminals". And Bill C-17 as it relates to the Explosives Act is not simple. For example, it says, "For the purpose of ensuring compliance with this Act...an inspector may...at any reasonable time, enter and inspect any...factory—"

This means, therefore, that this bill will also allow for the appointment of inspectors who will be able to inspect homes. I will not go into how this violates rights and freedoms because they do not need a warrant, for one. Suffice it to say that this could have very serious implications.

● (1125)

Again, we want to defend the interests of Canadians, the average citizens we represent. Those who hunt or engage in target practice are asking whether they will be able to pursue their hobbies and carry on as they did before. In committee, the government told us, "You will see once the regulations have been tabled". I am glad that Bill C-205 is before the House and I hope that it will be passed.

If ever the regulations were not consistent with the interpretations of representatives of civil society, in terms of the Explosives Act for example, this House would have to be able to request disallowance of the part of the statute that did not deliver the same message as that delivered to the organizations representing hunters and firearms owners who engage in target practice, in order to more properly represent the interests of the men and women who practice these sports and reload their ammunition.

This bill provides a mechanism. As my colleagues have pointed out, there could be a resolution in the House to disallow a statutory instrument or a portion thereof. The bill provides that a resolution shall be deemed to have been adopted on the fifteenth sitting day after the report is presented, unless, before that time, a motion to the effect that the resolution not be adopted is filed. Consideration of the motion shall be on the Wednesday next.

This bill establishes a mechanism. Statutory instruments could be passed under legislation, such as Bill C-17 amending the Explosives Act, regarding which representatives of civil society had requested in committee regulations to protect their rights and freedoms.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-205 guarantees members the ability to defend the interests of average Quebecers and Canadians. We will be able, here in the House, to act as their advocates and introduce amendments to statutory instruments that could threaten or violate their rights and freedoms. These regulations would be subject to a vote and a review process. This would surely satisfy representatives of civil society, of the men and women who elect us to defend their interests.

All too often we are forced to admit to them that we have no control whatsoever. Statutory instruments are a good example of this lack of say: members of the House have no control over them. It is up to the government, often ministers, to prepare the regulations, which are then submitted to executive committee. There is a procedure, but it completely excludes members, the men and women that are sent here by the public to represent them.

Bill C-205 will allow us to submit the regulations that are not in the interests of our constituents for approval in the House. For this reason, understandably, the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-205. We hope that all members will support it, and that the House will pass it unanimously.

• (1130)

[English]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-205, submitted by the hon. member for Surrey Central. I am glad that this will be a votable motion because I think it is an important subject that we are debating here today. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for what I am sure took an enormous amount of time, to actually research the issue and bring it forth in the form of a bill that could in a very precise and technical way redress what really has been a longstanding grievance within Parliament: how we can place under public scrutiny regulations that are enacted.

First I would like to speak in a general way, because in reading some of the background to the bill the first thing that struck me is that it is very technical. Probably most folks out there would wonder what on earth is going on and what are we trying to do here in Parliament.

Probably the most important thing to say is that a lot of our constituents who watch the debates in the House see us debating bills and engaging in sometimes very contentious debate that is reported in the media. Hopefully people have some sense of what is taking place in the House in terms of bills that are being debated. Then, when the bills are sent to committee, there are often witnesses called and again there is often a representation of the issues within the media, so there is some sense of transparency and disclosure about the debate that takes place.

What is important to note is that what we do in the House in terms of our legislative authority in making those bills covers only about 20% of what actually finally becomes enacted in terms of both bills and legislation coming from bills. More importantly, the other 80% ends up being encased in regulations that really receive very little public scrutiny. It is at this point that Bill C-205 would become a very key instrument in terms of bringing them under public disclosure through procedures to ensure that the limited procedures we have available to us now as members of Parliament through

various committees are actually strengthened and enhanced, to ensure that there is a procedure to deal with scrutiny of regulations which may be at deviance from the legislation, contradictory, unclear or illegal.

Having said that, I hope it is an adequate explanation in a general sense of what the bill is all about.

I come from a municipal background, having been a member of Vancouver city council for 11 years, and I know that there are quite a few members of the House who have a municipal background in city council, school boards and so on. One thing that has always struck me is that in the municipal arena the way we do our business is very much up front. If one goes to a city council meeting, a public hearing or a committee meeting, the business of the council or the municipality is very much on the table. It is very visible in terms of bylaws or policy decisions that are being made.

When I came to this place in 1997, elected as the member of Parliament for Vancouver East, I was immediately struck by the complexity of the rules that govern this place and how hard it is to really get at the essence of a matter in terms of understanding what it is that is taking place and to present that information in a way that is accessible to people, that is understandable and that takes place in a way that provides accountability for government decisions.

I know that the former NDP House leader, the member for Winnipeg—Transcona, who is now our parliamentary leader, was very involved in the McGrath commission way back in 1986. One of the interesting features of that commission is that it also addressed this issue of lack of oversight when it came to dealing with regulations.

• (1135)

Through the McGrath decision, with which the member for Winnipeg—Transcona was very involved, a provision was recommended and adopted to ensure that a Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations would have some ability to look at regulations and where they were at variance, to issue a report that they should be disallowed. However the interesting thing is that procedure which was enacted 16 or 17 years ago was done on a temporary basis. It has never been made permanent through a statutory order. Although it has been a step in the right direction, it has been defective in other ways and it does not include quasi-government agencies, crown corporations.

For example, when we look at organizations like the CRTC, the National Energy Board, the Canadian Transportation Agency or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, these are important government agencies that conduct all kinds of business in the interests of public policy and of Canadians. Yet what they may or may not do in terms of regulation has no public scrutiny for procedures that exist within our Parliament. That is a very serious shortcoming and it is something that has not addressed or followed up through the McGrath commission.

Private Members' Business

The bill before us today, Bill C-205, seeks to address some of these serious shortcomings. Although I will not go into all of the technicalities of the bill, one of the key issues on which it focuses is this. Under the limited provisions we have now, where the joint committee through its deliberation establishes that a regulation should be disallowed because it is contrary to legislation or for whatever technical reason it should be disallowed, when that order or resolution is brought forward to the House, there is nothing to enforce it. This is a very serious shortcoming in that the committee must then rely on the goodwill of the minister involved to do something about it.

We have a committee that may have spent hours and hours going through hundreds and thousands of regulations. Then it may have come to a determination, on an all party basis, which makes it a very non-partisan work, and concluded that a particular regulation needs to be allowed only to find out that it is at the mercy or the goodwill of a minister to then follow up. One of the most important aspects of the bill before us today is that it would change that procedure and ensure that Parliament would have the wherewithal and the powers to ensure that where the committee had put forward for a disallowance it would be enforced through a parliamentary procedure. That would be a vast improvement over what we have now.

While obviously the bill has to go through more debate, I hope very much that it will continue to receive very strong support from all sides of the House. It is part of a larger question about the modernization and the democratization of Parliament.

I am one member of a committee that is dealing with the modernization of Parliament and we have been looking at other parliamentary entities such as Australia and the U.K. We are trying to learn what other places do so we can use that to improve the transparency, the efficiency and the accountability that exists within this place.

Again, I congratulate the member for the work he has done. I would suggest that this bill is one very specific thing that we could agree to do to improve democracy in this House and to ensure that Parliament is in control of its own business. I would urge members to continue to support this bill.

• (1140)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, I also stand in support of the bill. It is very interesting to listen to debate on such a bill. Because the bill itself is an extremely technical one, the debate was focused on the material itself. Usually when we debate bills in the House, if we did not know specifically what we were talking about, we would never guess from the conversations and presentations that were put forth. Perhaps we should try to ensure that all bills and motions debated are technical.

The other interesting thing about this is, since the original introduction of the bill, I believe the House generally has become much more conscience of the need for change in Parliament. We have talked about parliamentary reform and a number of members are getting involved in trying to find ways to improve what goes on here and, in particular, to make government more accountable and more responsible.

In the original discussions we had a fair amount of opposition from the government. However this morning the one speaker from the government side, the formidable chair of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, spoke in favour of the bill. It does not surprise me because the gentleman certainly is a very intelligent individual who undoubtedly can understand fully the implications of such legislation, unlike perhaps some of his colleagues.

Attitudes are changing in relation to Parliament. The pettiness is starting to disappear little by little, but not quickly enough. As it does, we see much more serious debate on these issues.

In the words of a noted constitutional scholar, Eugene Forsey, a great Newfoundlander by the way, responsible government means a cabinet responsible to Parliament and a Parliament answerable to the people. I believe that says it all. There is nothing in Bill C-205 that detracts from this principle. On the contrary.

Senator Forsey was a member and joint chairman of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. He fully supported the adoption of a general disallowance procedure binding on government. It is very doubtful that such an eminent constitutional scholar would have given his support to such a procedure if he thought it was inconsistent with our constitution. Therefore, the arguments made to that point certainly are null and void. If that had been the case, I expect Senator Forsey would have been the first to make note of that fact himself.

The reality is that far from being inconsistent with the principle of responsible government, the proposed disallowance procedure serves to reaffirm the principle by ensuring that cabinet and other regulation making authorities are fully accountable to Parliament for the regulations they make in the exercise of powers delegated by Parliament. That is basically what the people in the country ask; that the laws and rules we make here are responsible, not only to Parliament but through Parliament to the people of the country.

The opposition one sees today to the adoption of a statutory disallowance procedure flows from the same source as did the opposition to the creation of a parliamentary scrutiny committee more than 30 years ago. It is a case of the bureaucracy resisting any change seen as lessening its own control and power.

The case for statutory disallowance procedure is a simple one. The Parliament of Canada is the source of the legislative authority that is delegated not only to the governor in council and ministers but also to various other regulation making authorities such as the CRTC, the Canadian Transportation Agency, and others. That Parliament has a valid interest in overseeing the manner in which the authority is exercised cannot be doubted, and this has long been recognized in Canadian law.

Private Members' Business

•(1145)

For more than 30 years now regulations by these regulating authorities have been subject to parliamentary oversight and scrutiny and have stood permanently referred to the Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. Effective parliamentary scrutiny however, requires effective parliamentary control. The lack of an effective and adequate parliamentary control procedure was partly addressed in 1986 when the government accepted to be bound by standing orders providing for such a procedure.

We have heard other members talk about the McGrath Committee, which really was an extremely revolutionary committee. I should remind the House that the chairman of the committee, James McGrath, was also a great Newfoundlander.

Because of the now legislative nature of the standing orders however, that procedure could only deal with a portion of the instrument subject to parliamentary scrutiny, those made by the governor in council or by minister. That experiment has been a success, as even those opposed to Bill C-205 have acknowledged.

As we have seen, there has been opposition to this procedure in the past but as people begin to realize that we are really here to be responsible, number one to Parliament and particularly through Parliament to the people of the country, we have become much more conscious of having the proper procedures in place that will ensure this accountability exists and can be carried out.

I would like to congratulate the person who introduced the bill. The amount of work and background material that has been provided and the attempt to offset the naysayers in relation to their presentations factually says a tremendous amount for the interest and the dedication of the individual involved. In congratulating him, I want to say we support the bill and look forward to it coming to a final vote.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see a fair bit of support around the House for this private member's bill, Bill C-205. I hope that will carry us through the vote which ultimately will take place.

Remarks were made earlier in the House congratulating the member for introducing the bill. I also congratulate him but want to pay tribute to others before him who introduced bills similar to this one. It has been almost a tradition of joint chairs of the standing joint committee to introduce a bill of this nature to, in effect, remedially correct a small omission existing in the disallowance procedure, also referred to earlier by members.

I will abandon a lot of my formally prepared remarks because members have been good enough to recite the history, going back to the 1970s and the reform in 1986.

Essentially, the bill corrects an omission which was acknowledged even as the procedure was put into place in 1986. The disallowance procedure allows the House to disallow a regulation made by the governor in council and by a minister if the regulation does not comply with the law established by the House and the regulation delegated under procedures in law created by the House. If a minister or agency of government is delegated authority to make subordinate legislation, they must comply with the laws and the procedures put

in place by the House. If not, they must correct it. In the end, if there is an impasse the House will disallow it.

The standing joint committee has done this work for almost 30 years, and 98% of the time the committee spends its time correcting errors in regulations. In many cases, the government itself will withdraw the regulation and make the corrections. A lot of work done on this is about as exciting as dry toast. In fact, the debate on the bill today will not appeal to many people because it is just that, a technical thing.

One member earlier suggested that the House did not have a disallowance procedure. We do have a procedure and we use it. The House has disallowed regulations nine or ten times over the last 10 years. The system does work but there is a piece of it that does not.

Approximately 90% of the regulations that are made are governed by the existing disallowance procedure. It is only a small segment of regulations made by agencies to which the House has delegated a power to make regulations. Examples are the CRTC, the Canadian Transport Commission and a few others. The reason the House does not and cannot disallow is that our authority to disallow is only enforceable in relation to ministers, the Prime Minister, the governor in council, and members present in the House. We can enforce in relation to them, and it works. However, for a technical reason, it is constitutional in nature. The orders and resolutions of the House cannot be enforced against citizens out there in the real world, such as an agency. Agencies do not sit in the House. Regulations made by those agencies under authority of the House sit in a no man's land, not subject to the full and final scrutiny of the House and the disallowance procedure.

We deal with defects in those regulations. We work with them all the time. We write them, deal with them and corrections are made but occasionally we have an impasse.

•(1150)

I have noticed that sometimes it takes a lot of extra time to hear back from agencies when the committee writes to them. Why? I am not sure why. However they know that at the end of the day the House is not in a position to disallow. The House cannot use the hammer or the nuclear option, as we sometimes describe it on the committee.

All the bill would do is remediate the missing 10% of the ambit of the net of the disallowance authority. To many people it may seem like a small thing. It is only about 10% of the volume that we do. In fact, I cannot recall a case where we actually did want to do a disallowance involving an agency. The point is that the procedures and authority that we have are incomplete. They were acknowledged as being incomplete by the justice minister in 1986 when the procedures were put in place. Anybody who sees the whole procedure understands it is incomplete. All the bill would do is complete it. We do that by placing the procedure into statute form.

Private Members' Business

By putting this in statute form, the bill would create a clock. It would provide a 30-plus day timeframe within which the bill would be deemed disallowed. The current disallowance procedure involves the House making an order to the minister, the governor in council or the Prime Minister, to revoke the instrument. In every case the government has done that when the House has ordered it. What the statute would do is directly revoke the instrument or allow the revocation of the instrument when the House makes its order, and there would be a 30-plus day period when the department could re-enact, replace or correct the revoked order. That seems like a reasonable procedure and, as colleagues have pointed out, that 30 day period exists. It does not exist in some jurisdictions, such as, I believe, Australia. The Province of Quebec has a similar procedure. In those cases, when the House does the disallowance, it is immediate and we end up with a timeframe when there is not a regulation in force.

We acknowledge in the House that there are times when it is just practically stupid to revoke a regulation and leave nothing in its place. It may cause inconvenience, extra costs and disorder. In every case, the committee takes these issues into consideration when it feels it has to move toward a disallowance. We realize the implications, and the authority of the House, through the committee, has been used very responsibly over the years.

It is not worth very much in terms of critical mass but I want to point out that about a year ago I wrote and published a pamphlet dealing with parliamentary reform. It was called "Backbench Exercises". One of the 16 recommendations in the report was that the House remediate, fix, make complete this statutory disallowance power simply because it was an omission. It is a defect.

In the end, I can only submit that it is absolutely illogical for the House to have a procedure in existence involving disallowance, which it has already, that controls those to whom we delegate the authority to make subordinate law and not include all the regulations, all the subordinate instruments. It is an omission. All we are trying to put in place here is some remedial legislation, a statutory procedure, that would in effect make the whole disallowance procedure whole, complete, logical and effective.

I will of course be supporting the bill. There may be some need to fine tune it a bit at committee if it is adopted by the House, which I hope it will be, in the vote. I want to signal to those who care about this very dry, technical area that I will be working very aggressively on both sides of the House to do my very best to see that the legislation is put in place so that it will serve the House and Canadians in the future.

• (1155)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, prior to becoming involved in politics and coming to this Chamber I never in my life thought I would actually be making a speech on an act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act, disallowance procedure for statutory instruments.

It is one of the most arcane subjects and titles that I have ever run into. I commend my colleague for Surrey Central for bringing this to the attention of the House. I think he must stay up awfully late at night pouring over books or doing something because I cannot figure

out how in the world anybody would even have discovered this as being a problem, much less being able to come up with a title for it.

As I understand the situation, we in Canada, being a civilized democracy, are in a position of taking rules and regulations from government. We are in a position of responding to those rules and regulations as put forward by government and the government in turn comes to the legislature and speaks to us, the members of Parliament, who in turn, hopefully, are doing an adequate job of representing the people in our constituencies and the people of Canada.

In fact, if we were to take a look at the rules and regulations under which Canada is run, we would realize that approximately 20% of all the rules and regulations that we are asked to adhere to are actually legislation. The other 80% are brought in by regulation and that, indeed, is what this is about.

I make that explanation because I am a novice to this particular topic. I had to have the member for Surrey Central kind of walk me through this so that I could understand how important this actually was to the people who either read *Hansard* or are watching the debate on CPAC today.

Parliament has the moral responsibility and the responsibility to the Canadian people to make laws. At the same time, we as members of Parliament, as politicians, have a responsibility to react in an appropriate way to the direction that we take from the Canadian people. However, if we are only responsible for 20% of the laws that directly impact on the people of Canada and 80% of the other regulations that impact on the people of Canada, surely this place, where we are responsible to the people of Canada through an election process in our great democracy, should have the ability to oversee and possibly override the regulations of these agencies.

In my critic role as the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, I am aware of a couple of places where the rubber really meets the road, and I use the following as examples.

The CRTC reports to Parliament on an annual basis as is prescribed by law. Therefore our committee and people in the House of Commons who come to the committee have the opportunity, in public, for about a two or three hour period, to grill the people who are at the CRTC. However this is where the rubber meets the road because there are so many people in Canada who have serious concerns about the CRTC, the power and the regulations that it has and what it is bringing forward.

The CRTC designates licences. It designates how broadcasters, for example, will actually come to the marketplace with entertainment, information or with products. It comes forward with rules and regulations about Canadian content.

Interestingly, the direction the CRTC takes about Canadian content does come from the heritage minister and from the government to a very great extent, but the way in which it interprets Canadian content and the level of power that it brings against private broadcasters, and, indeed, even the CBC, is very profound. These are bureaucrats. I will give them full credit and say that they, undoubtedly, are trying to work in the very best interest of Canada and under their mandate by legislation and under the direction of the heritage minister and of the government but, nonetheless, they have the ability to make these regulations without us, without we who are responsible to the Canadian people through the election process, being able to override those regulations.

• (1200)

I can give another example, also in the heritage department. Under Parks Canada, which is an agency of the government, we are going to have the bureaucrats in that department making regulations with respect to marine conservation areas. This is new legislation that has just come through the House. How this legislation will be enacted and what number of people will be impacted as far as their fishing rights and their mineral exploration rights are concerned in the marine area that will be covered by the marine conservation area, how those things will happen, will not come under the direct scrutiny or the ability of this House to overturn the regulations.

So we have an untenable situation wherein we have well-meaning bureaucrats, and I want to again point that out, that these are dedicated civil servants who are really trying to do the best, in their minds, to bring forth the appropriate regulations. But across from those people we have the individuals, the Canadian citizens, who are being impacted by those regulations. Those Canadian citizens do not have the power of this place, the power of the House of Commons, to be able to have a scrutiny of those regulations. Indeed, I see this proposed law, as arcane as the title may be, as a very important element of bringing the democratic process to where it should be, and that is where we, the elected people in our elected, democratic, free society, have the ability to override and to impact the bureaucrats and the decisions they are making.

• (1205)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 12:06, 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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That this House:

(1) endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security in the Middle East region;

Supply

(2) express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women, and other personnel serving in an exchange program with the United States and for those service men and women performing escort duties for British and United States' ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that all will return safely to their homes;

(3) extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy during the military action to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction period that will follow; and

(4) urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we sit here today, brave allied coalition soldiers are making a great sacrifice in their effort to disarm Saddam and to liberate Iraq. In these last several days, Saddam and his regime, through their own evil methods, have demonstrated once again the urgency and the need and the greatness of the endeavour now being pursued by our allies. Less than a week into this fighting, and already this vile tyrant has instructed his regime to torture and murder allied prisoners of war in direct violation of the Geneva convention.

An hon. member: That's not true. That's a lie.

Mr. Stockwell Day: I have just started my speech and already a Liberal MP across the way is defending Saddam Hussein. That is a shame.

Remember: these are soldiers of our closest neighbour, our strongest ally and historically our best friend who have been tortured and in whose hands Saddam Hussein stands guilty of violating Geneva conventions. This latest war crime only adds to the revolting record of this most vicious of modern day tyrants and dictators. These soldiers, our allied soldiers, our friends, are fighting to disarm a madman and to liberate the Iraqi people and our hearts and prayers go out to them and to their families and loved ones at this time.

Saddam hopes that this latest violation, this public humiliation, will weaken the resolve of allied countries. For the sake of decency and humanity, Saddam must be proven wrong on this point and I believe that this latest vile act of his will actually strengthen the resolve of allied countries to disarm him and to liberate the Iraqi people. Saddam's latest brutality constitutes further evidence that Canada should have supported the allied coalition to remove him.

Therefore today I present a motion that endorses the allied coalition to disarm Saddam Hussein and to liberate Iraq. It supports the personnel of the Canadian army, navy and air force, who are serving in exchange programs with the allied forces, and it commits us to help the Iraqi people to build those institutions of freedom and democracy that will be needed in a post-Saddam era.

This does not require the Liberal MPs to violate the orders they have been given in terms of previous instructions from the Prime Minister. They can endorse this and still keep their party line and not fear the crack of the party whip on their backs.

The motion supports the enforcement of 17 Security Council resolutions, the historic liberation of the Iraqi people, and the disarmament of Saddam Hussein. That has been the clear position of the leader of the Canadian Alliance, it has been the position of the members of Parliament of the Canadian Alliance, and we laid out this position in the House over six months ago.

Supply

May I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that in October of last year we made these three points. Should Saddam Hussein not agree to or not fulfill an agreement to unconditional and unrestricted access for UN weapons inspectors, or should the UN Security Council issue a declaration to demand Iraqi compliance and should Iraq fail to meet those conditions, or, and this was a key point of ours six months ago, should some UN Security Council members falter in re-emphasizing their own past declarations, Canada should stand with its allies in ensuring that Saddam understands that failure to comply will bring consequences.

That was our position six months ago. We have stayed with that. Our leader has been consistent on that point and so have we, and more and more Canadians are moving to that position.

Saddam has failed to disarm. The United Nations has failed once again to disarm him. Now is the time that we should join with our closest allies to disarm Saddam Hussein, and we are not doing that.

This motion, however, proposes something that is meaningful, something we could do, something that could add somewhat and something that at the same time could take away from the wrong-headed restraints of the federal Liberal government when it comes to helping our allies.

Let us examine at this point the only alternative to this course of action that the Prime Minister has put out as his preference, and that has been containment. As an alternative to true disarmament the Prime Minister has proposed that we try to keep Saddam in some kind of a box. Here is what the Prime Minister said on March 9: "... Saddam cannot do anything anymore. He has troops at the door and inspectors on the ground, planes flying over—and he cannot do anything". The Prime Minister thought that was a sufficient policy. The Liberal position is that somehow Saddam Hussein can be isolated in a box and sanctioned into not threatening the Middle East or the international community.

● (1210)

The evidence is clear that this policy of containment has not worked over the last 12 years. That is because containment, as he says, is only working today because there are 250,000 allied troops on Saddam's doorstep at a cost of \$1 billion a day. It is untenable that this kind of buildup could be held for a long period of time. We know from experience that the moment the troops were to leave his doorstep Saddam Hussein would once again restart his weapons program. He would have done it in a heartbeat, as in 1995 when, in defiance of everything he had ever promised, he moved troops once again to the Kuwaiti border. It was only when U.S. troops aligned against him that he backed off.

Ironically, the Prime Minister supported the containment strategy so strongly and thought it was such a great idea that he was prepared to contribute exactly zero troops to enforce it. The Canadian government has shouldered none of this burden, but it is prepared to insist that the allies continue it at a huge cost and do it indefinitely.

International unity is required for any containment policy, but when one considers the Liberal anti-Americanism of the government and its penchant for constantly obstructing the efforts of our closest allies, international unity was not achievable through Canadian attempts through the foreign policy channels. Even if Saddam were

contained, we could not have removed the danger that he represented to the world. It would not have been difficult for his regime to slip those vile weapons that he has into the hands of vile terrorists. The world could not have afforded that risk.

It was also untenable to think that the world could stand by and allow him to continue with the murderous death rate of his own citizens: 100,000 citizens have died at his hands since 1991. That is a death rate of about 5,000 people a month. I respect protestors' ability and right to protest, but they never talk about the loss of life that has been going on under this man's hands for months and years.

To conclude this point, the policy of containment was not working. It could never have worked and we Canadians should have joined our allies in doing something about that. We can do something today with this motion, and we can send out a message of moral support, if nothing else, to the allied coalition, which is right now in the process of enforcing UN resolution 1441, disarming Saddam Hussein and in fact liberating Iraq.

If we fail to do this, to give some sign of support through this motion today, Canada's standing in the world will continue to be diminished. The Liberal government has seriously injured the interests and the reputation of Canada by refusing to support the United States, the United Kingdom and 42 other countries in their effort to disarm Saddam and liberate Iraq.

Because of the Prime Minister's decision, we have now taken a certain place as a country on this new geopolitical divide that has opened up around the world as a result of the war against Saddam. This Liberal government has placed Canada on the wrong side of that divide. Our most cherished historical allies either support or are actually a part of the allied action to disarm Saddam and liberate Iraq. The United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, these are the countries, along with Spain and the new emerging democracies of the new Europe, with whom we share the most in common and our interests are most aligned.

We now stare across the chasm of this new divide. We stare at our former historical allies. Now we are in the position of relying on our allies, and relying on them alone, to be taking these steps to protect international security and, at the same time, Canadian security. Indeed, it is really ironic that the Liberals have been able to decimate our armed forces through lack of funding, because they know, though they do not admit it, that our neighbours to the south would come to our rescue if ever we were under attack. Yet now, when our allied friends need us most, our government curls up into the political fetal position and cowers behind a UN resolution that was never passed.

● (1215)

Consider this divide and with whom we are now allied. We are now allied with a minority of nations at the G-7, a minority of nations at NATO, and a minority of the OECD countries. We are in a minority with those international groups. We have aligned ourselves with some of the fiercest and most deeply entrenched tyrannies on earth. We are now allied with Libya, Syria, Iran, China, North Korea, and Cuba. How do members think Canadians feel about that?

Supply

I remind the House that these tyrannies have a vested interest in the survival of their fellow tyrant in Baghdad. The dictators of Damascus, the tyrants of Tehran, and the Syrian puppets who now control the once free people of Lebanon all know one thing: that once the people of Iraq have tasted democracy and freedom, other oppressed people of that region will want it too. I want that for other oppressed peoples around the world.

These are our new friends and the rulers with whom the Prime Minister has aligned us. Does the government not understand that we will be judged internationally based upon the company we keep? Canada's historic reputation as a liberator, as a loyal friend to our democratic allies, and as a courageous defender of good over evil is now clouded and compromised.

This brings me to my next point of Canada's enlightened national interest. That interest lies in the advancement of democracy and freedom around the world. Often we speak of advancing democracy and freedom around the world as an act of charity or simply a humanitarian gesture, but it is more than that. All of the historical evidence demonstrates that democracies tend to trade more and go to war less with each other by virtue of the fact that they are democracies.

Democratization abroad therefore serves not only world peace and world interest, it serves Canada's economic and security interests at home. The infusion of democracy in Iraq could help democracy spread throughout the entire realm. With the eventual success of democracy across the Middle East would come a real curtailment of the terrorism that is associated with fanaticism from those regions.

There is no shortage of evidence that this is so. Renowned international relations professor Dr. Michael Doyle explained this proven link between liberty and peace. He said:

Democratic states, founded on such individual rights as equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation are fundamentally against war. When the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible. Furthermore, citizens appreciate that the benefits of trade can be enjoyed only under conditions of peace. Thus the very existence of free market democracies such as the United States, Japan, and our European allies...makes for peace.

It is hard to deny this argument. Over the centuries hundreds of wars have been fought, yet only a handful of these wars have been fought between opposing democracies. Spencer R. Weart explained this in his exhaustive study in a book entitled *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*. He wrote:

Yet several scholars (including me) did notice, independently, a peculiar regularity: during the past century there have been no wars between well-established democracies.

He went on to share the results of rigorous statistical analysis in which scholars compiled lists of hundreds of conflicts from the past two centuries. The researchers asked themselves an important question: "What was the probability that absence of wars between well established democracies is a mere accident?" Their answer: "Less than one chance in a thousand".

According to another renowned political scientist, Jack Levy:

...this absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations.

Regardless of cultural, economic, religious, ethnic and social considerations, democracies have proven to resist the urge to attack one another, and that is where the rubber meets the road.

We know that Canada would be better off if the world were a more peaceful and secure place. We know that democracy is a prerequisite to long term security and peace. Therefore, we must conclude that democratization in countries like Iraq is not only a moral good, but also a major contribution to Canada's own peace and security. In this sense, Canadians could advance our own enlightened national interest while helping Iraqis to achieve theirs. It is yet another reason why Canada should have stood on guard with our allies in disarming Saddam Hussein and liberating Iraq, and yet another reason why supporting the motion could be a small step to letting the world know of where our hearts lie in that area.

• (1220)

It is in Canada's enlightened national interest to see Iraq transformed from a dungeon of despotism to a lamppost of liberty, a beacon in the region that could inspire change across that whole land.

I want to review for the House four tangible steps the official opposition has proposed to achieve these high ideals. We must help convince our once close allies that even though the Canadian government appears to be blindly clinging to a wrong-headed decision not to join our allies, that in fact we are still with our allies, that we are serious about assuming our responsibilities in a world threatened by terrorist groups and rogue states.

First, the House must pass this motion which endorses the allied coalition to disarm Saddam and to liberate Iraq.

Second, we must take the necessary step to send the signal that the government could protect Canadian security and rebuild our diminishing international reputation by outlawing all known terrorist groups.

We must ban, for instance, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, the group that routinely takes credit for suicide attacks in Israel and causes tremendous instability in the entire region of the Middle East. We must outlaw the National Liberation Army. This is an Iraq-based terrorist group with links to Saddam Hussein. Our own intelligence agency confirms that that group raises money in Canada. Canada must outlaw the group Jemaah Islamiah. They are the al-Qaeda linked Bali bombers. These are the terrorists who joyfully and proudly took credit for decimating hundreds of people. It is because of their commitment to continue to do so that our allies have banned them. The Liberal government refuses to ban their activities on Canadian soil. What is wrong with the government?

These are some steps that we can take to show our allies that we are serious about doing something, even in a limited way to advance security domestically and internationally. Canada must outlaw these and all other terrorist groups which our allies have also outlawed.

Supply

Third, we can take the funds that the Auditor General says exist in this slush of surplus which the Liberals have and commit the amount that the Auditor General has identified which coincides with the studied Canadian Alliance option which our armed forces need to become truly effective. The Auditor General herself has identified these funds. The funds are there and we could commit them. The federal government refuses to do that. We must shoulder our responsibility in that area.

Fourth, we must immediately expel Saddam's diplomats from Canada. Saddam's regime is once again engaged in odious violations of another convention and this is the Geneva convention with the torture of these allied prisoners of war. The government could demonstrate its commitment to that convention with the expulsion of Saddam's remaining representatives.

Other allied nations have done it but Canada refuses. Whose votes are the Liberals worried about losing? Our government, our Prime Minister and these federal Liberals do not have the intestinal fortitude to say to diplomats representing one of the most evil regimes on earth that they should go home and help Saddam clean up his act. The government refuses to do that. There is no excuse for that.

The government could simply do it today. It could simply tell those representatives to go home. There, sitting across from us, is a Liberal MP who gives the thumb down as we bring that forward as a suggestion. We cannot abandon the Iraqi people in a post-Saddam war. We must be there in the efforts of reconstruction. Canada has not been invited to be a part of the reconstruction effort and the rebuilding of the democratized Iraq.

The motion today is straightforward. Although the government still refuses to join our historic allies, the passing of the motion could send an important signal. It is a small signal for Canadians, but a big encouragement to our allied friends who are moving toward Baghdad as we speak and seeing their comrades in arms fall to the side.

Others are paying the ultimate price, a price Canadians dearly but willingly paid as peacemakers at Vimy Ridge in Europe, at the beaches of Normandy in World War II, the hills of Korea and in Kosovo.

●(1225)

The people of Iraq will always remember their liberators. They will also remember that Canada was not there. However, if we pass this motion they will remember that in a small way we were willing to support their liberation and the day when they, as people on this planet, would eventually experience freedom and democracy in their own land. We must pass this motion today.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of the member opposite with great attention. He mentioned that there is a coalition of the willing and he equated those which had not joined to countries like Libya.

Given that the British parliament has given lessons of democracy to the Commonwealth countries, how does he account for the fact that of the 54 Commonwealth nations, only Australia and Britain are members of the coalition of the willing? Is he suggesting that the

other 52 members of the Commonwealth should be lumped in with Libya?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had been listening, he would have heard clearly that I said the Prime Minister has put us in the camp with some of the fiercest tyrannies and dictatorships on the face of the earth today: Libya, Syria, Iran, China, Cuba, and communist dictatorships.

I know that the Prime Minister does not like the fact that we are now publicly in that camp. He may have had us privately in it before. I know he does not like that. I know there are other nations there also. However our historic allies, not only with whom we have had economic interests, but with whom we have had political and diplomatic interests, are now staring at us across this divide. We are not allied with them and there will be long term repercussions of that. They will remember.

By this motion we would like to give them something else to remember. That even in a limited way, at least by showing some moral support, we were there with them in this dark hour as they lead this movement to a far brighter hour for the people of Iraq and the people of the world.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the member conveniently ignores the millions of people all across the continents who are demonstrating daily against the war. I suppose Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are great examples of democracy in the world.

The member deplores the fact that we have not joined the United States immediately and that we have turned our back on our greatest friend. In September 1939, Canada declared war immediately when war was declared by Britain and France. Does he blame the United States for having decided, for its own reasons, not to join in the war until 1941?

●(1230)

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, the question from the member reflects something I said in my own speech, that Canada was there in World War I. As a matter of fact we were into World War I before the Americans. Canada was there in World War II as I mentioned and as the member just reiterated. It is important that we recall these things. We were there in the Korean crisis and Bosnia.

The Prime Minister still has not told us why he said it was internationally correct for us to be bombing in Kosovo in 1999. I happen to agree that it was the correct position. That madman Milosevic had to be stopped, but Milosevic, as awful as he was, does not compare anywhere near the capabilities of Saddam Hussein, either in past history, present capability or future intent. The hon. member can do the comparisons if he likes. We were there and it just underlines my position.

The member also mentioned people who protest. I am thankful that people in Canada and many countries around the world have the right to protest, but they are still in a distinct minority. There were more people protesting in Quebec City, when I was there for the conference of the Americas, against our involvement in free trade. Because there were huge crowds in Quebec City and across Canada, does that mean the Liberals should abandon free trade?

Supply

I am glad they can protest. We should also keep in mind that protests would not be permitted in Iraq. As somebody pointed out today and it was interesting to read, the closer we get to Baghdad the lower the protests get. As people were protesting on the streets of Canada and around the world this weekend, Iraqi citizens were greeting the Americans by the hundreds and thousands that the protesters were saying should not be there. These are some other things to keep in mind on the other side of the ledger.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, it is a joke to say that there is a distinct minority of protests when a great number of people in Spain, upward of 80% of Italians and a majority of British people are against the war. It is a joke to say that it is a distinct minority when there are millions of people across all continents who are protesting this war. The member cannot count too well.

He purposely evaded one point. He made the point that it was poor policy and a disgrace that we were not joining the Americans this time as war was declared. I asked him how he reconciled the fact that in 1939 we joined at the outbreak of war in September and the Americans did not join. He quietly and purposely evaded the question. Is he blaming the Americans for not having joined then and then joining in 1941? If it was consistent for the Americans to do it then, why is it wrong for us as a sovereign nation to take a different tact today?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what I just said. I am will give some credit to a Liberal prime minister and my colleagues might be upset with that, but in 1939 the prime minister of the day and the government of the day made a decision based on principle. Members did not lick their fingers and put them up in the air to see which way the wind was blowing. The government made a decision based on principle. That is the difference between the prime minister then and the Prime Minister we have today. The government did not wait to see who else was in. Canada was in based on principle. This government and this Prime Minister have subjected our sovereignty to a couple of nations on the Security Council.

Only a month or so ago the Prime Minister said that resolution 1441 justified action in and of itself and did not require another resolution. When he heard there might be a veto, he said that we could not do anything because a veto would be in place. We did not wait for the Americans in 1939 and we did not wait for them in 1914. We made a decision back then based on principle.

The member also has raised the issue of polls around the world, which exactly reflect how the federal government arrived at its position. It checks the polls. Now it has a problem developing. The member made an inaccurate statement when he said that a majority of the people in Great Britain were opposed to what Tony Blair was doing. That has changed in the last few days. That position has moved incrementally over the last two months until it is now a majority position. It happened the same way in Australia where the leadership took a principled decision with only 10% support in the polls, and it now enjoys a majority position. The same thing happened in the United States.

There is an amazing coincidence. If we stick to the truth and do the right thing long enough, if we are willing to be courageous at times and show leadership and not just go with the way the wind is blowing, the truth and the right position will eventually prevail. The Liberals should try it.

●(1235)

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, it is very normal for countries when they are at war to have their populations support their soldiers in the field. I draw the attention of the member opposite to an item that was in the papers this morning where an Iraqi soldier, just a young man, had been captured and when asked why he was fighting for a regime like Saddam Hussein, he simply replied that he was fighting for his country. It is very normal for people to be moved when their soldiers are in the field.

The member opposite said that the Prime Minister did not take a principled position, but of course he did. He said that Canada should not go to war without the support of the UN Security Council. This was a position supported by 52 members of the Commonwealth. Only Australia and the United Kingdom have joined the coalition of the willing. The member has said that the coalition and the Americans are our allies, but surely the Commonwealth are the people who we have shared democratic values with for years and these are the people whom the Prime Minister and Tony Blair should be heeding, not Eritrea and Ethiopia and other countries like that which are in the coalition of the willing.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, that is an amazing position. First, I will address the remarks related to one Iraqi soldier.

I have had family members in the past who have gone to war, as I am sure many of my colleagues have, and maybe even my colleague opposite has. My father was in the second world war and my grandfather was in the first world war. I know many members here share that.

I never did have a chance to meet my grandfather on my mother's side because of the years of torture he endured. When he was rescued and liberated, he never really made it out of the hospitals when they brought him home and he died as a result of that torture. My grandfather on my father's side also suffered and was paralyzed in the first world war.

The accounts that I hear from soldiers is that although they are obviously on opposing sides, there is a mutual respect for people who fight for their country. Therefore it does not surprise me at all that there was one Iraqi soldier who said that he was fighting for his country. I do not know what that has to do with the issue.

There are also thousands, and we have watched them, rushing to surrender to the troops. They were so quick to surrender, I heard they were surrendering to the media, to journalists, much like a lot of Liberal MPs surrender to the media over here.

The Deputy Speaker: I regret the time has lapsed. Resuming debate, the hon. Secretary of State for Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Hon. Gar Knutson (Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it is with honour that I rise today to participate in the debate. Before I begin, I would like to inform the House that I will be splitting my with the hon. Minister of Defence.

Supply

In regard to the issue of what Canada has done, let me be clear that Canada has in fact done its part. We have carried our share of the diplomatic burden. Over the course of the past 12 years, we have made every effort to support the inspections process. Importantly, Canada was instrumental in working toward the increased effectiveness of the sanctions regime.

During our tenure on the Security Council, from 1998 through 2000, we worked to make the sanctions regime more humane. During the very tense last few weeks, Canada worked around the clock to find a compromise that would unite the UN Security Council but, unfortunately, that was not possible. This despite the fact that we do not currently have a seat on the Security Council.

We wholeheartedly offered our support to the efforts of the United States and to the United Nations' inspections efforts to secure Iraqi compliance and to press for Iraq's disarmament. Unfortunately, no agreement was reached among the Security Council on a way forward.

Canada's position has always been that we would require the approval of the UN Security Council if we were to support military action in Iraq.

The United States, the United Kingdom and others have undertaken a coalition military action against Iraq. As we have made explicit, Canada will not be participating in the military campaign against Iraq. We have made this clear to our colleagues in the House. We have made it clear to the Canadian public. We have made it clear to our partners internationally. For us to support military action against Iraq, it would have been essential to have the endorsement of the UN Security Council.

We have held to this position from the beginning of the crisis. This position is consistent with the longstanding Canadian foreign policy of multilateral engagements, support for the United Nations system and a deeply held commitment to diplomatic process as a means, where possible, to averting conflict.

This policy reflects broad based Canadian values and it reflects the interests of the Canadian public, in terms of going to war as a last resort. It is to the Canadian public that we in the government and in the House are ultimately responsible.

Our American and British allies understand why we have taken the position we have. Our relationship with these two key allies will continue to flourish, despite this difference of opinion. We continue to consult closely on a broad range of foreign policy issues and we will certainly work together toward Iraq's recovery and reconstruction.

The United States and Canada have always worked closely together. We remain close allies. We are working together in the ongoing war against terrorism.

Our relations with the United States and the United Kingdom are too broad in scope and too important to be derailed by any one foreign policy decision, no matter how weighty.

We continue to work side by side with our friends and allies in the campaign to prevent and combat terrorism. This campaign will require our constant vigilance and effort. Canada remains committed to making an important contribution to this campaign, a fact that is

recognized by the United States and all our allies. Canada has every intention of keeping our commitments now. Nothing will shake our resolve to continue these activities.

In support of the global campaign against terrorism, we have ships and planes stationed in the gulf.

In regard to where we are now, we recognize that only Saddam Hussein bears responsibility for the current situation in Iraq. We arrived at this dramatic point in history because of the ongoing intransigence of the Iraqi government. This government, for over 12 years, has failed to live up to its international obligations. It has disregarded repeated calls from the UN Security Council for cooperation and full disarmament.

We have long hoped that it would not come to this, that the crisis could be resolved without military action. However now that the war has begun, we can only hope that victory for our friends, the United States and the United Kingdom, will be quick, decisive and with as few casualties as possible.

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the first casualties of the war. We extend our deep condolences to the American and British friends who have suffered their first casualties and of course to the families of the fallen.

• (1240)

Our hearts go out to the Iraqi people who have suffered gravely over the course of the last two decades and who have now suffered their first casualties of this war. We hope against hope that casualties will be few and call upon all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and to protect the civilian population.

The international community has a critical role to play in helping to meet the needs of Iraqi civilians. It is for this reason that Canada supports the UN's humanitarian preparedness and provided some \$5.6 million to support its activities. It is also why we are urgently reviewing options for responding to the requirements which have emerged since the conflict began.

The Government of Canada will continue to uphold its internationally recognized humanitarian tradition of seeking to provide protection and assistance to those in need. In this respect, through our diplomatic efforts we will continue to encourage the countries neighbouring Iraq to facilitate the work of international aid agencies and to ensure access is provided for Iraqi refugee and asylum seekers who may be seeking protection.

We will, likewise, continue to strongly support efforts to ensure that there are minimal disruptions in the delivery of food and other humanitarian goods within Iraq, including those which have been delivered under the oil for food program.

It is critical that the Security Council reach an early decision on how to adjust this important mechanism so that it can be effectively tapped to meet the new and emerging needs of the Iraqi people.

Supply

We also are committed to reconstruction. We in the international community must be committed to the people of Iraq once hostilities have ceased. We need in turn to consider what we may do to help to lay the groundwork for a more stable, a more just and a more prosperous future for the people of Iraq. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that violence does not propagate itself and that the rule of law takes hold, that human rights are promoted and protected and that the Iraqi people are enabled to determine their own peaceful course forward.

This will be no simple task after over a quarter century of tyrannical rule. The reconstruction of Iraq will be a significant undertaking and an important responsibility for the international community. This process should be driven by the needs of the Iraqi people.

The United Nations has a key and essential role to play. It will be important very early on for UN agencies, alongside non-governmental organizations, to provide for basic humanitarian aid, protection, clean water, sanitation, food, shelter, medicines and so forth.

We are consulting closely with our international partners, including the United Nations, the United States and others regarding the involvement of the international community in Iraq. In the aftermath of the conflict we hope that the UN will be able to work with coalition members, international partners and the Iraqi people to redevelop Iraq's capacity to govern.

It is time for the international community to come together. For the sake of the Iraqi people it is time for the members of the Security Council to put their differences aside and to work to endorse the resolutions which will be key.

As an immediate priority, it will be important to find ways to ensure the continuation of the oil for food program on which 16 million Iraqis rely as their sole source of food. It will also be important for the Security Council to allow for some transitional arrangement which could provide a framework for the reconstruction and recovery of Iraq.

The Prime Minister has indicated Canada's willingness to participate actively in multilateral reconstruction efforts. It goes without saying that the extent and nature of our assistance will depend on the situation on the ground and the needs of the Iraqi people. We have a long and proud tradition of assistance in post-conflict situations as peacekeepers, as civilian police, as humanitarian workers, as non-governmental organizations and as civilian experts. It is a tradition for which we are renowned the world over and a field in which Canadians have experience and expertise that can be brought to bear.

However our responsibilities do not end here. They extend beyond this particular point in history and this particular crisis. In the weeks, months and years ahead we will have to redouble our efforts to prevent terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to support and strengthen international and multilateral institutions. These responsibilities go beyond any crisis or region and they will remain critical elements of Canada's foreign policy in the years ahead.

● (1245)

For now we must hope that the Iraq campaign is over quickly and successfully for our allies and with a minimum of casualties on both sides. Throughout, we must work to address the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and hope that a better future lies ahead for them.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the unprecedented events of the weekend and the fact that the war was brought home to the living rooms of Canadians, and given the fact that some parties may disagree as to the fact that they are there, I think we can all agree or should agree to the following motion. I would ask the consent of the House to put the following motion.

I move that this House express its unequivocal support for the Canadian servicemen and women and other personnel serving in the exchange program with the United States, and for those servicemen and women performing escort duties for British and United States ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that they all will return safely to their homes.

● (1250)

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville have consent of the House to table the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member who just gave his presentation made a statement that Canada should not be involved with our allies because there was not approval from the UN Security Council.

By the way, most of what the member was saying seemed to be endorsing the motion I proposed so I hope he will vote for it when it comes to the floor for a vote tomorrow.

However would he answer this question? He said that it was essential that Canada not be involved in the conflict unless it had the go ahead from the UN Security Council, and yet in 1999 in the military intervention that included the bombing of Kosovo in which Canadians were involved, and in my view quite rightly, there was no UN Security Council approval. As a matter of fact, the United Nations once again in that instance, as in many others, failed to stop the massacre of people. There were a number of times when the United Nations has failed miserably to do that.

If the Prime Minister and the government felt it was all right to be in Kosovo on a military intervention which had no UN Security Council approval, I have to assume that there is some kind of list of criteria which the government uses when it decides whether it will be involved in a particular intervention because we were involved in Kosovo without UN approval.

Could the member share with us the list of criteria by which the government decides that, yes, it will stop a madman like Milosevic but who really is in the junior leagues of tyranny and murder compared to the far greater madman Saddam Hussein? Could the member explain the differences for us?

Supply

Hon. Gar Knutson: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a valid question and one that can be fairly easily explained. The situation on the ground was quite different. It was the government's view back in 1999 that the UN Security Council had received what was an arbitrary veto by the Russians. The facts on the ground screamed out for immediate intervention. A genocide was going on.

Kofi Annan at the time even invited members to come forward with their own solutions and expressed disappointment with the UN Security Council. In the situation that led up to this war the facts were quite different. A UN inspection process was going on. Blix and the inspectors were asking for more time. The Iraqis seemed to be adjusting to the inspection process, albeit rather late in the game. Therefore I think it clear that the facts were quite different.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, first, Dr. Blix, along with every other country in the world, continue to say that Saddam Hussein was not complying with resolution 1441.

The member said that the situation on the ground was much different, that a genocide had to be arrested. I agree with that. The number of people Milosevic had massacred up to that point were about 8,000. It was tragic. The numbers were huge but they are tiny in comparison to the number of people being massacred by Saddam Hussein in his own country every year. A million people have died since he became leader of Iraq in 1979. Since 1991 his murder rate is approximately 100,000 and that does not include those who are disappearing in prisons. It does not include those who are disappearing in the rape rooms of Saddam Hussein.

Here again my point is that Saddam Hussein has a far greater record of genocide against his own people than Milosevic ever did. Why do we not agree to stop him?

Hon. Gar Knutson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back. The hon. member asked what our criteria was. I would suggest that part of Canadian values is that going to war is a last resort. Reasonable people can differ as to when that is and I respect those differences. However it was clear from our point of view that there was a process going on. Many members on the Security Council agreed with us that the process should have been allowed to continue.

• (1255)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the second part of the opposition motion. Although Canada and the United States came to a different conclusion on Iraq, it is as true today as it was a week or a month ago that the United States remains Canada's greatest friend and ally.

It was over 60 years ago that the two countries signed an agreement in Ogdensburg by which Canada undertook always to work co-operatively with the United States in the joint defence of our continent against our common enemies, whether those enemies were Nazi Germany during the second world war, the Soviet Union in the cold war or terrorists today.

Equally fundamental, Canada has undertaken for decades to ensure that America's northern flank, the Canada-U.S. border, never poses a security risk for the people of that country. We have been working and, indeed, redoubling our efforts over the past weeks, months and years.

Finally, following the events of September 11, 2001, it became apparent that the defence of North America required going overseas in pursuit of those terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center on September 11. Canada was part, in the early days, of the forces to fight in Afghanistan and, indeed, at one point we were the fourth largest contingent.

The point I would like to make today is that notwithstanding our disagreement with the United States over policy on Iraq, our commitment to terrorism remains strong, as strong as ever, notwithstanding the greater risk we face.

That brings me as well to the question of principle where the opposition claims that we are not acting on principle. I would say that we are. We are acting on two principles, the first of which was referred to by my colleague, the principle of Canada remaining true to our multilateral traditions and to the United Nations; and the second principle, which has more to do with my portfolio, is that we remain true to our commitment to fight terrorism.

Notwithstanding the different conclusions to which we have arrived on Iraq, our commitment to terrorism remains as strong as ever, if not stronger than it was before this war broke out, and that is a very important principle to which I would like to refer in my remarks.

Naturally I fully support the part of the opposition's motion that calls for the House to offer its unequivocal support for members of the Canadian Forces serving in the gulf region. I said this last week when I urged members of Parliament to demonstrate solidarity in our support for their continued efforts and sacrifice. I will say it again. I am proud of the Canadian Forces wherever they are working. The training, courage and humanity of our men and women in uniform are second to none. They have proven this time and again in operations around the globe.

[*Translation*]

We have a duty to provide support to members of the armed forces, regardless of where they are serving. Why do they merit our support? Quite simply because they are prepared to defend us and to defend what we believe as a nation.

They accepted the principle of unlimited responsibility. They are prepared to risk their lives for Canada and, as a result, merit our unconditional support at the very least.

[*English*]

There is no question that we fully support our personnel currently serving on board ships in the Arabian Sea region. We are proud of them. They are fulfilling important responsibilities and are contributing directly to international peace and security. For example, they have conducted maritime interdiction operations on vessels entering and leaving Iraq.

Supply

Also, since the fall of 2001 and the attacks on the United States, the primary focus of our ships has been their contribution to the campaign against terrorism through the conduct of visit and search operations. These operations entail boarding vessels and making sure that they are not helping al-Qaeda or Taliban members escape the area. Since the earliest days of Operation Apollo, our ships have been doing an outstanding job. They have hailed more than 10,000 ships and conducted more than 260 boardings. This represents about 60% of all the boardings carried out by the coalition fleet.

As well, Canadian ships escort and protect vessels transiting through the Arabian Gulf. Canada must be able to support and protect the military forces of those nations that are participating in or supporting the campaign against terrorism. If a ship of one of our allies comes under attack, members can be assured that we respond: Let there be absolutely no doubt about that.

As further proof of the high quality of the work being done by Canadian Forces members and ships in the region, Canada has recently assumed command of a multinational task force of ships called Task Force 151, consisting of not only Canada and the United States but also Holland, New Zealand, France and Greece. Canadian command of Task Force 151 under Commodore Roger Girouard represents a significant geographic expansion of Canada's area of operation in the Arabian Gulf region, and the added responsibilities will enhance Canada's ongoing contribution to the campaign against terrorism.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

As well, we should be proud of the members of our air force who are currently deployed in southwest Asia.

[*English*]

Last week I mentioned that the outbreak of war on Iraq would lead to an increase of the terrorist threat in the region. The mission being carried out by our ships, aircraft and personnel in the region therefore becomes much more important. I think another important point to emphasize is that certain members of the opposition, notably the Bloc and the NDP, would wish us to withdraw our ships just when the risk of a terrorist threat becomes higher; in other words, when the going gets tough or the risk becomes greater, we cut and run. That is not the policy of the government.

[*Translation*]

We Canadians are fortunate to live in a country where there is peace. The events of September 11 have, however, made us aware that no one is totally sheltered from danger.

[*English*]

This is not the time to stand down from our responsibilities and commitments. This is not the time to falter in our support for the Canadian Forces and our allies.

As I have indicated, the situation in Iraq may mean increased risks to our personnel in the region and I want to advise members of the House that we have taken the necessary precautions to protect our personnel from possible biological and chemical attacks. All of our ships are designed to survive such attacks. They are equipped with wash-down systems and with so-called citadel protection, which

gives the ships the capacity to seal themselves in the event of a biological or chemical attack. Each of our ships also carries protective suits, gas masks and filters to protect all personnel from chemical or biological agents. Our troops deserve the best protection against possible attack and we have made sure that they have it.

I should mention the exchange officers. We have a longstanding commitment to exchange military personnel with our allies. This commitment predates armed conflict in Iraq and is now a matter of routine military business, business which benefits our members and allies a great deal. At this time there are about 30 Canadian exchange officers whose units may be participating in the conflict in Iraq. Based on the nature of their employment and national direction to them, these members will use force only in self-defence. Let us remember that national command of these troops is and will remain at all times with our chief of defence staff.

Our allies count on our exchange officers. They are fully integrated into the operations of their units. We have absolutely no intention of breaking our commitments to our allies, particularly at this critical time. Their sudden withdrawal could potentially endanger the security and safety of allied personnel, and it would damage the reputation of Canada and the Canadian Forces as a trusted ally. For all of these reasons, our exchange officers will remain where they are.

In closing, on behalf of the members of the Canadian Forces, I would like to express my condolences in regard to the fallen comrades, the American soldiers who have died so far in these operations. I would also like to express my wish, as the Prime Minister did last week, that the Americans prosecute this war successfully and that it comes to an early conclusion in order to minimize human suffering and loss of life on all sides.

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: Given the number of members who wish to ask questions of the Minister of National Defence, I would hope that the questions and the responses could be within a minute.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will make my question very brief. I listened carefully to the Minister of National Defence outlining that having exchange officers placed with allied military partners is a routine matter, that it is really routine military business and not to be trifled with in any way, but surely the Minister of Defence would agree there is nothing routine about finding ourselves in the situation where our American neighbours have launched an illegal war in defiance of international law.

We find ourselves embroiled in a situation where, certainly to date, the minister and the government have not been able to clearly answer questions about the terms of engagement which would guarantee that Canadian armed forces personnel are not in any way, shape or form associated with or participating in that illegal war.

I would ask the minister to address that question. If he now can provide clear answers about the terms of engagement, then at least that would enlighten us as to what kind of rationale he is using in backing up his assertion that this is routine business.

Hon. John McCallum: First, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that we express our condolences in regard to the fallen British soldiers as well.

Supply

In response to the hon. member, while I would echo the former deputy prime minister and not accept her various premises, I would also say that while war is never routine, nevertheless exchange programs are routine in the sense that Canada has been carrying out these programs for decades with our allies. They form a very important part of working together with our allies. We never work alone. We always work with one or more allies. These exchanges are important for purposes of interoperability and working better together.

As I said in my speech, we do not intend at all to withdraw these exchange officers. At best, such an action would send an extremely negative message to our allies at this difficult time. At worst, it could put the lives of our allied soldiers in jeopardy and this the government will not do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister should face the fact that his approach is inconsistent.

First, the Prime Minister announced last week that Canada would not follow the Americans to war in Iraq. Now, under the cover of joint operations and exchange programs with our allies, there are people accompanying American officers in Qatar. There are probably ground soldiers attached to combat units following the Americans into Iraq and there are ships in the gulf. The minister has just said himself that if the ships are attacked while escorting warships, they will defend themselves.

Currently, we have military forces involved in the war in Iraq. However, last week, the Prime Minister told us that he would not follow the Americans' lead. I would like the minister to explain this inconsistency. In our minds, this inconsistency will exist until all these soldiers have been withdrawn.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, the government's approach is in no way inconsistent. What the hon. member opposite is criticizing are the very things I am proud of.

He is criticizing us for having ships in the gulf to support the war against terrorism. I am proud of this involvement. With regard to our gulf war allies, be they British, Australian or any of the other nations with ships there, we are there to protect them against terrorism. The risks are greater now, and we are proud to be there.

If the hon. member wants to criticize us for that, that is his business, but I am proud that we are there.

• (1310)

[*English*]

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister has, in words, expressed support for our military personnel. I would like to ask him how those words are backed up by actions.

For example, a helicopter on our ships increases the capability of those ships severalfold. Last week there was a time when we had no operational helicopters on board our ships and Canada is supposed to be proudly leading this battle group. We have a report, which the minister dismisses, done a month ago by Captain Hill, whose job it is to point out deficiencies in the Sea Kings and their equipment. This report says the Sea Kings are not safe to operate, that they cannot carry out the function they are supposed to be carrying out in the gulf

right now, which is that interdiction work, that escort work, yet the minister dismisses this work done by very competent and capable Canadian Forces members with input from several crews who fly Sea Kings.

I want to ask the minister why his words say one thing and his actions say exactly the opposite.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, the main thing I dismiss is the credibility of the claims of the hon. member across the way, because on the question of the safety of the Sea Kings, I could believe him or I could believe our chief of defence staff, himself a helicopter pilot, who assures me of their safety. I could believe him or I could believe the three helicopter pilots with whom I had a conversation recently.

As well, I have the evidence coming from the very successful operations carried out by our Sea Kings in the course of the war against terrorism over many months.

But I would acknowledge, and tragically and sadly we have seen this in a number of helicopter accidents or crashes in the last few days, as well as one a week or so ago in New York, that flying in general and flying helicopters in particular inherently can be dangerous and is risky. Therefore, we in the House should have particular praise for those who carry out this mission, which by its very nature does have its risks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

From the outset I would like to say that we have some problems with the Canadian Alliance's four-part motion. We take issue with all four paragraphs.

The first paragraph says: "endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance —". This seems to be the exact opposite of the motion that we passed last week.

During an opposition day, the Bloc Québécois moved a motion that was voted on by the Parliament of Canada. This motion said the exact opposite of the motion being moved today by the Canadian Alliance. We called upon the government not to participate in the military intervention initiated by the United States in Iraq.

This was also consistent with a statement made by the Prime Minister last week—a 35 second statement made during oral question period—when he announced that Canada would not follow the U.S. because this intervention did not have the support of the UN.

I think the first paragraph of our colleague's motion—which states that at present, we are going to support the allied coalition's decision to go to Iraq—contradicts the motion that we passed last week.

I would like to remind him that last week his party and the Progressive Conservative party voted against the motion. I think a good majority of the members of this House agreed that we should not follow the U.S. in Iraq, for all the reasons described in the preceding weeks.

Supply

Why do we disagree with this motion? Quite simply because the Bloc Québécois has said from the beginning that it is against war or pre-emptive strikes. Anything that is not supported by the UN is very dangerous. We are beginning to see the tip of the iceberg.

We were told that it was going to be a walk in the park, a picnic; that is far from the case right now. We also heard that everything would be done to avoid civilian casualties. That does not seem to be the case right now, either. When Baghdad is deluged with missiles, there will inevitably more than just military casualties. Civilians live in that city. They are being held prisoner there and civilian lives will be lost.

So, we cannot agree with those who think we should be there. In fact, since the beginning, we have said that there must be agreement within the UN, that there must be an agreement. Any military intervention must be carried out under the auspices of the UN, and this is not the case. This intervention is pre-emptive, and we cannot support that, either.

What would prevent South Korea, then, from attacking North Korea tomorrow? They could say, "Listen, we felt they were a threat. So, we want to attack them now".

The fact that it is happening without the UN's sanction is a serious problem. We have been consistent since the beginning. We said that we would not take part in a war without UN approval. We also asked for proof and unfortunately we did not give them enough time.

The United States, Britain and Spain short-circuited the whole inspection process, thereby causing a war. They intervened directly on the ground and the inspectors were forced to leave the area, despite reports from Hans Blix, the chief inspector, that all was going very well, as we thought. They decided to attack, at the expense of civilian loss of life and in terms of other costs the war will involve, not just in terms of monetary costs, but also in terms of the political stability of the region.

We are starting to see this elsewhere. Turkey is threatening to move into northern Iraq. Many neighbouring countries are powder kegs. If the Arab world sees this as a threat against all Arabs, which it currently does, I think that terrorism will flare up again, not only in those countries, but even here in North America. Let us hope that it will not happen in Canada, but the Americans certainly fear such terrorist attacks because, since the war started, they have substantially increased security.

So, the first paragraph does not work. Neither does the second paragraph, which asks the House to express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women. I really do want to express my support for the overall role played by the Canadian forces, but everyone knows that some of them are now in Iraq and that some of them are taking part in these activities. This is an incredible contradiction by this government.

• (1315)

On one hand, the Prime Minister is telling us, "We are not going". On the other hand, he is saying, "We have exchanges with our allies, and we will go with them". This amounts to doing indirectly what we said we would not do directly; it is the same thing.

People have been captured; British and Americans have been killed. What would have happened if a Canadian soldier had been captured? This is a strong possibility. What sort of problem would that have created for us? We said last week that we are not going, but some of our soldiers are there. This is not logical.

The second part of the motion expresses the hope that all will return safely and quickly to their homes. We agree with this. However, the best way to ensure this is to bring them home immediately. We should be consistent in our decision not to take part. The best way to ensure their safety is probably to bring them home immediately and to say, "We are no longer taking part". This is not currently the case.

Right now, we still have officers in Qatar who are planning scenarios, watching the evolution of the war in Iraq and adjusting scenarios accordingly. Canadians are taking part.

The minister just said that Canadian ships are going to accompany British and American warships and that if they are attacked, the Canadian ships will defend them. Therefore, they are taking part in the war. There are American and British combat units in which Canadian soldiers are currently fighting and the minister says they are going to stay there because otherwise we would be deserting our allies.

Again, this is inconsistent with the resolution the Prime Minister moved last week, namely that we would not follow the U.S. in this war. There are many inconsistencies and we have not even mentioned the AWACS planes; the famous planes that spy on Iraqi territory, on which you will surely find Canadian airmen. They are also taking part in the war. They certainly will not fire any shots, but they are informing ground troops on what is happening in Iraq to try to pinpoint the situation and provide support to military operations to make them as effective as possible. They too are taking part in the war.

And then there was the question asked last week about the special forces. Naturally, the minister told us, "No, absolutely not. There are no special forces". Yet, I would like to remind the House that with regard to Kosovo, as soon as the war there had ended, the government admitted, "Yes, our special forces were there".

Do I need to remind the House that in Afghanistan it was through a photograph on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* that we learned that the special forces were there? I have the feeling that forces that are likely special have joined the American Delta Forces and the British SAS troops and are currently on the ground.

The best way to ensure the safe and sound return of our soldiers would be to say immediately, "Get out of there and come home". This has to be done before the situation gets worse and someone is killed or taken prisoner. If that were to happen, Canada's contradictory stand would become absolutely clear.

No one disagrees with extending support and sympathy to the people of Iraq. However, we are being consistent. From the beginning, we wanted to avoid massacres; we wanted to avoid the intense bombardment of Baghdad that is currently going on.

Supply

We knew there would be civilian losses, if it came to pass. Right from the start, the Bloc has been saying, "Let us allow the inspectors to continue, for they will bring the inspection to a suitable conclusion without any need for war. It will take longer, but war will not be necessary". We were motivated by compassion right from the start, and have been calling for support for the people of Iraq right from the start. Our approach in the House has been to say, "Give peace a chance, say no to war".

Finally, our Canadian Alliance colleague is calling upon the government to commit to helping the people of Iraq, but neglects to mention that this must also be done under the UN umbrella. This is the time to rebuild the bridges that have been broken down at the UN. If his motion stated that this must be done immediately, but within the UN, I think many would find this satisfactory. There are, therefore, a number of aspects in his proposal that force us to say that we cannot subscribe to it.

In conclusion, I must add that we have been in favour of a peaceful approach right from the start. We express support and compassion for the people of Iraq and will continue to do so in question period today. As I said last week, one more day of war is, for us, always one day too many.

We must work to put an end to this butchery and to get back on the path of peace, from which the world has strayed. The Bloc Quebecois will most definitely object to the motion before us at this time.

• (1320)

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since March 19, there has been cause for great sadness. The United States and Britain have committed their armed forces to a war against Iraq. The Prime Minister of Canada said that this war is unjustified, illegal and illegitimate.

I would like to point out that more than 750,000 Quebecers marched on the streets in Montreal, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec City, Chicoutimi, Sherbrooke, Rivière-du-Loup, Gaspé, Gatineau and many other communities, I am sure. Every region of Quebec is against this war. As well, last week, 1,162 students from the polyvalente Deux-Montagnes in my riding asked me to deliver a petition against this war to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which I did.

This weekend, the Les Patriotes scouting association in Saint-Eustache, the Les Patriotes continuing education centre in Saint-Eustache and the high school in Oka all sent me petitions asking the Prime Minister not to change his mind and not to involve the Canadian military in this war. Clearly, since the outbreak of hostilities, human beings, civilian and military, from both sides, have died. Such a tragedy. Such an atrocity.

Today we ask ourselves the question: why is this war being fought? Is this a pre-emptive war? That makes no sense. As it was already mentioned, we do not know whether or not Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. The inspectors, having left the country in 1998, were starting over with the inspection process. Obviously, there are some in the United States who were convinced that the answer to this question is yes. They feel that the United States and the world should intervene militarily to ensure everyone's security. So far, the

inspectors found nothing to confirm that Iraq had re-established its nuclear program.

Of course, Saddam Hussein would have loved to get his hands on a nuclear weapon and he probably has chemical and biological weapons in his arsenal. However, does this justify a so-called military intervention? Is it justified?

Of course, we do not want to discover that Saddam Hussein has nuclear weapons only when he uses them. However, this attack is illegal under international law. No country has the right to attack another country because it thinks it should for whatever reason. In fact, there must be solid proof for any intervention. This is akin to what the Japanese did to Pearl Harbor.

But the greatest danger of a pre-emptive strike is the precedent created. Now that the United States has attacked Iraq, what will prevent other countries from intervening to stop much greater threats? Japan could attack North Korea, India could attack Pakistan, and so on.

It should also be said that all this seems a bit simplistic. How many other regimes have or could have weapons of mass destruction? Should they be attacked?

• (1325)

How many other dictators represent a threat to their region? So, we are stuck in a very pragmatic, selective and, by its nature, unstable policy. In answer to this argument, the United States can only flex its muscles and tell the world that it is an exception on the international scene.

In terms of the war against terrorism, is this war part of the fight against terrorism? This is another question that must be asked. The inspectors could not find conclusive proof that Saddam Hussein's regime is helping or helped Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. However, the war provides plenty of reasons to resort to terrorism.

In terms of disarming Iraq, I think that the international community, through diplomacy, was on the right track. In fact, on March 17, UN inspectors said that 72 al-Samoud missiles had been destroyed, approximately half of Iraq's stockpile of such weapons. The destruction undertaken constituted a substantial measure of disarmament, according to chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix. Mohamed El-Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, indicated, during the same session, that he had found no evidence of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq nor that Iraq had attempted to import depleted uranium or uranium.

On March 10, the UN chief inspector announced that he would be prepared to submit a new report to the Security Council next week. Unfortunately, March 19 put an end to that.

There is one more question one might well ask: why this war? To get Saddam Hussein out of power? Yes, getting rid of Saddam Hussein might be a good reason, but I think that diplomacy, coupled with pressure from neighbouring countries, could have pushed him into involuntary retirement.

There is another question: might this have something to do with controlling the region's oil? No sooner asked than answered, that one.

Now, having asked those questions, I have one very important and highly complex point to raise: what about after the conflict? I agree that we need to acknowledge the complexity of the question, as well as the regional and international impacts of the situation, and will raise a few points in this connection.

Other Arab countries are seeing public demonstrations, and some other governments might fall if they were to support the United States too openly. This would clearly be a backward step.

There is the question of transition, the post-Saddam era. The United States will stay there. The Kurd issue is of concern to Turkey, which has its own problems with its Kurdish minority. Syria, with an ethnic mix similar to Iraq's, is concerned about the possible disintegration of Iraq. The Palestinian question is also of great importance to any assessment of the situation. Let us keep in mind that Saddam Hussein is trying every way possible to mobilize the Arab world against the Americans and their Israeli allies.

In closing, Canada must speak out loud and clear before important decisions are made on the future of Iraq.

• (1330)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle. Second, I would say in the clearest possible terms, and I am sure this will not surprise the members of the official opposition, particularly the foreign affairs critic of the Alliance, that I personally and my party unanimously stands in very strong disagreement with the motion before this House today in which they once again are putting forward what in our perspective is an absolutely uncritical embracing of the illegal war that has been launched by George Bush.

To talk about the coalition of the willing is to simply ignore the spectacle that unfolded before our eyes of the kind of threatening, bullying and bribing by the Bush administration to try to bring a number of countries into that so-called willing coalition. Someone quite accurately suggested that a more apt term for many of the nations that fell into line in the face of those pressures would be coalition of the coerced. It is not missed on people that a good many of those countries are extremely vulnerable to American retaliation, in many cases the poorest countries, and I think it has been one more very unhappy chapter in this devastating chapter for world history through which we are now living.

However I welcome the fact that the official opposition has today put before Parliament once again for debate the continuing horrors of what is happening in this illegal war. It is appropriate for us as parliamentarians not to for a moment accept the characterization that has been placed on Canada's decision to not involve itself directly in the war.

I noted the words that were used by the official opposition spokesperson, the foreign affairs critic, which essentially created the impression that Canada failed to take any responsibility whatsoever for the disarmament of Saddam Hussein and that it walked away

Supply

from its responsibilities to ensure that weapons of mass destruction in Iraq were eliminated. That is an absolutely wrong construction.

It completely ignores the facts which was that peaceful disarmament of Iraq was underway. That was absolutely the basis of the detailed report from the weapons inspector, Dr. Hans Blix, a distinguished international diplomat, really a servant of the world, someone respected for his competence and his integrity. He made it absolutely clear to the Security Council members and to the people of the world looking on that peaceful disarmament was in fact happening, but not at the accelerated rate that we would have wished. He also made it clear that it was the intention of the weapons inspectors to step up the pace of the disarmament process and to become even more focussed and rigid about the meeting of specific requirements and specific deadlines.

What the Alliance is conveniently choosing to ignore is that it is precisely the decision of the Bush administration to launch this illegal war which has brought that weapons inspection process to an end along with the orderly, peaceful disarmament which was happening. That goes to the heart of one of the very key reasons for our strenuous and profound difference in perspective with the Alliance that has put forward this motion.

In a very particular way I welcome the fact that we are today again debating this matter in the House of Commons.

• (1335)

Although I applaud the decision, as does my party, as do properly Canadians from coast to coast to coast who mobilized around urging the government to stand firm for peace, it is not adequate for the government to say that we will not participate and then say that we wish the Bush administration well in winning this war as quickly as possible, and let us get it over with. That is not a principled position nor does it live up to both the tradition and I think the desperate plea of peace loving people around the world and the peace building nations of the world for Canada to play a proactive role in the situation in which we now find ourselves.

In addition to the position that we have very strongly advanced that Canada, if we are not to participate in this war, has to remove Canadian armed forces personnel from the war theatre, from the war arena. Nobody in their right mind believes that our armed forces personnel, whether it be the military exchange officers or personnel on our naval ships, will be able to remain uninvolved as non-participants in the war on Iraq that is now in high gear. That must be the reason why the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister have been totally unable to put forward coherent terms of engagement which would make it clear that is attainable. It may be the aspiration and it may be the intention, but I think in practical terms nobody actually believes that is possible.

When we bid farewell from Halifax port to naval ships that were headed for the Persian Gulf, that worried me a great deal and certainly worried the loved ones of those armed forces personnel, who now find themselves in the gulf or en route to the gulf, that this would result in Canada entering the war through the back door. That is the concern that rises and mounts as the government stubbornly refuses to address this crisis and bring our personnel home.

Supply

Let me turn very quickly, because I know the time is short, to the actual motion that is in front of us. It is the third reason for welcoming the fact that this debate is in the House today. It would be much hoped that additional members of the Alliance Party and also of the Conservative Party would rethink their position and have the courage to stand against this war. The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca did and that showed a good deal of conviction and courage for him to do so. The member for Cumberland—Colchester, who has been so involved in trying to help build peace in the Middle East, also did. Let us see some other members from the Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Parties take the opportunity that is afforded to them by this debate to also take a principled stand against this war.

Looking at the motion, in the fourth paragraph of the motion it states

“[We] urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours”

This is disingenuous if I have ever seen anything disingenuous in my life. The reality is that testimony from experts representing the most respected humanitarian agencies around the world came before the foreign affairs committee, and that foreign affairs critic knows it, and said that it would be a humanitarian disaster of monumental proportions if the Bush attack on Iraq were allowed to proceed. Why? Because it would bring to an instant halt the oil for food program on which 16 million Iraqis are dependent for their daily nutrition and for their very survival and subsistence.

That is exactly what has happened: placing people who were already very vulnerable, who very much at risk in a severe crisis beyond what they have been facing for the last 12 years.

• (1340)

This is not a concern about something that might happen. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that a massive humanitarian crisis has already struck the residents of Basra. Food is non-existent, water is unavailable and electricity is not at hand. This was not an unanticipated consequence. This was an absolutely predictable consequence of the Bush administration leading the war in Iraq, urged by the Alliance Party and others unwilling to address the humanitarian crisis. Any resolution suggesting that that party is ever so concerned about the humanitarian crisis is disingenuous, if not downright hypocritical.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question is in relation to a comment the member made regarding the disarmament process that is in contradiction to everything I have read from Dr. Blix who talks about his distress. He stated in some detail that they still have not accounted for large quantities of the components for VX gas, large quantities of manufactured toxins, thousands of gallons, quantities for the development of anthrax. He also talked about not being able to account for 6,500 chemical bombs. Not one nation has come out and said that Saddam Hussein was complying with UN resolution 1441.

Will the member table for our enlightenment the comment apparently attributed to Dr. Blix, and I will quote her, “that the peaceful disarmament of Iraq is well underway”. She has used that

specific phrase on more than one occasion. It seems to be in contradiction to everything we have read and everything reported on this. Could we get a reference to the peaceful disarmament of Iraq being well underway?

• (1345)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, I suppose we all have a certain amount of selective perception, but one thing is absolutely clear. Dr. Blix went before the Security Council and said that more time was needed. In fact, he very much indicated that the Iraqi government had gone from very little cooperation to more cooperation to, and his most recent description was, proactive cooperation. Finally, progress was being made.

If the member thinks he can persuade his own constituents or any other thinking person in the world that Hans Blix, the chief weapons inspector, said, “Let it rip, let the bombs drop, that is the way to liberate the people of Iraq and free Iraq of weapons of mass destruction”, then I think the guy is living in Disneyland. There is not one shred of evidence that the chief weapons inspector was advocating that the war on Iraq should proceed. The Security Council members overwhelmingly were not persuaded of that view either. Arguments were made on both sides.

It is not clear that the total disarmament of Iraq of weapons of mass destruction was going to keep right on the schedule that the Blix weapons inspectors were in the process of laying out, but it is absolutely clear that they pleaded for that process to continue because as he said, peaceful disarmament is not only possible, it is happening.

It is a tragedy that the process was not permitted to continue because what we see instead is a beginning toll on human life of armed forces personnel on both sides, but most tragically of all, innocent civilians of all ages in a situation not of their making.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla made much of the coalition of the willing, the 30 countries that support the U.S. and U.K. attack on Iraq which includes Albania, Colombia, Nicaragua and Turkey. I noticed that 160 countries are not on this list. Two absentees are Kuwait and Qatar which are the very bases that are being used by the Americans and the British to attack Iraq and yet they are not part of the coalition of the willing. Are they possibly the coalition of the unwilling?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has underscored the point I was making earlier, that if ever there were a euphemism that did not stand up to scrutiny, it is the notion of the coalition of the willing. We know that many of those countries either have not signed on for fear of retaliation, or have been coerced into signing on because they knew perfectly well that they were highly vulnerable to the backlash of the Bush administration.

I want to take the opportunity to say very briefly that I am extremely adamant that we take the opportunity to say at every turn in the House that this is not about anti-Americanism in any sense of the word. There are a massive number of Americans who stand with us for peace. Let me say briefly that in my riding last weekend we—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Supply

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that the thought about anti-Americanism is taking a strong stand against George Bush and his illegal war, as a matter of fact, just before the war broke out, there was Gallup poll done in the United States. The Gallup poll done in the United States on March 17, said that if the United States went forward with military action without United Nations approval, half the Americans would be opposed to the invasion of Iraq and 47% would be in favour of it. Even in the United States of America a lot of people are opposed to what is going on in Iraq today.

I want to say very clearly that I am shocked at the Alliance Party. It wants to send the young men and women of Canada into a theatre of war, an illegal war that has been inducted by George Bush that violates the international law. That is absolutely disgusting and shameful. It is an illegal war that has a small minority of Canadian people supporting it. The Alliance Party is supposed to be a grassroots party reflecting public opinion in this country. I say shame on the Canadian Alliance. The more Canadian people know about the Alliance, it is no wonder it is now in fifth place in the polls.

The war is illegal. The war is immoral. George Bush is dead wrong in what he is doing. I also say that Tony Blair is wrong. If it was not for Tony Blair lending the support of Great Britain, George Bush would not have the support at home to conduct a war. That is the cover that George Bush needs, the credibility of Great Britain, in terms of conducting the war that is wrong, illegal and immoral, that will kill tens thousands of innocent people in Iraq.

An hon. member: Nonsense.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom: Nonsense? There are 15 million people in Iraq who are surviving because of food from the United Nations. There are people now in Basra who are suffering because of the lack of food and the lack of water.

There are these moralizers on the other side who are taking a stand against the Pope and against the churches, against all the Christian values in the world. These moralizers on the other side are taking a stand against all kinds of reasonable people. In fact even Henry Kissinger, that famous Republican, has said that this war is illegal, that this war is a violation of international law. He was the chief Republican adviser to the president of the United States for a long time. Yet these Neanderthals get up in the House and say to commit young Canadian men and women into the theatre of war. I find that absolutely disgusting.

Then they try to distort the position of certain political parties. I had it reported to me that the foreign affairs critic for the Alliance made a comment that the CCF was against World War II just because one person, the leader of the party, J.S. Woodsworth, who was a pacifist like Gandhi, was the only member of the House of Commons who got up and voted against the war. I remember Tommy Douglas saying to me that Woodsworth had difficulty reading notes and he would pass him his notes to make his speech at that time as he stated his position. The CCF caucus and council took a strong stand in terms of committing our country to war. I had an uncle who was killed in Normandy in that war.

There is a kind of distortion and misinformation that goes on by the Alliance. I find that to be absolutely offensive from the party across the way.

The global public opinion is overwhelmingly against what George Bush and Tony Blair are doing in Iraq. People in our country are opposed to what they are doing in Iraq. There have been large demonstrations weekend after weekend. They are growing in number right around the world. I am very proud to be part of that movement. We will do whatever we can to make sure that does not happen.

We could go to any riding in this country and we would find that people are increasingly opposed to this illegal war by George Bush, this illegal action, a violation of the United Nations.

I wish the people in the Alliance Party would take this seriously. Here they are condoning something that violates international law. The so-called party of law and order. The so-called party of grassroots Canadians. The so-called party of Christian values in the House of Commons. This is what the Alliance is doing. People should be aware exactly where that party stands, in opposition to what it said historically. I say that already there are innocent civilians who are dying.

I am probably one of the few members in the House of Commons who has been in a war zone and has seen people die. When I was 22 years old, in 1960, I volunteered to go into the Biafran civil war. I spent a week inside the war zone. I saw people dying of starvation. I saw little kids who were dying of starvation. I saw people who were shot, who were wounded and whose limbs were blown off because of bombs.

● (1350)

I was driving a small convoy of cars late one night near a little airstrip when we were caught in a bombing raid. I saw the terror and the fear and I know the terror and the fear when bombs are dropping beside us. When the bombs started to drop we jumped out of the cars and dived into the jungle brush. People all around were crying. Some people were saying the rosary. People were praying. People were terrified. That is what is happening in Iraq today.

I saw kids in big feeding centres at sunrise in the Biafran jungle who were dying of kwashiorkor, the protein deficiency disease. I saw kids who died because of a lack of food. Food supplies were cut off because of a war that was being carried on. This is what is happening in Iraq today. To have a political party in our country advocate being part of that theatre of war, being part of that suffering that is going on, I find absolutely disgusting.

I do not think many people realize the suffering that goes on. I remember being there, hearing little kids cry, seeing people terrified and seeing people who were walking skeletons. I remember someone coming out of the bush in Biafra carrying a little child who was barely alive and who was basically a skeleton because of a lack of food and water.

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I remember going up to the front after dark one night in that war to see what happened. I saw the terror on the Biafran side when they fired into the jungle because they heard the noise of machine gun fire on the other side. We took back with us in a jeep that night a wounded soldier who had bullets in his hands and arms that had come from the other side.

This is what happens in a war. People do not seem to realize that. It is not like sitting at home and watching some kind of video game on CNN. These things are bloody awful. We saw yesterday the American prisoners of war who were taken by the Iraqis. We saw how awful that was. We saw how awful it was to see the Americans, with Iraqi prisoners of war behind barbed wire, kneeling down with machine guns pointed at them. This is the reality of war.

Here we have the Alliance across the way once again ignoring their constituents, ignoring the Canadian people, ignoring public opinion, ignoring what the churches are saying, ignoring what international law experts are saying and ignoring what the United Nations are saying. I say thank God for Jacques Chirac. Thank God for France, Germany, Scandinavia and for the majority of people in this country, the majority of people in this world, who have taken a very strong stand against an immoral war. Yet we have the Alliance taking the exact opposite position.

Jacques Chirac and France represent global public opinion. Chancellor Schroeder in Germany represents public opinion. The Scandinavian countries represent public opinion. The Dutch and the Belgians represent public opinion in the world and also in their countries. This is what this war is really all about.

I wanted to say to the House today that I am pleased that our country is not involved but I am concerned that we do have some people on an exchange program who are now in the theatre of war. I believe those people should be pulled out of that exchange at this time. I am also concerned that we have Canadian ships escorting ships of war. I believe they should be pulled out of the region as well.

A time comes when we have to stand up for what is right, for being on the side of international law, not on the side of someone who is violating international law. We have to stand up for people in our constituencies, stand up for the people in this country and stand up for global public opinion. Being on the same side as Norman Schwarzkopf, Henry Kissinger, the Pope, the World Council of Churches and public opinion is not a bad thing. I am proud that I stand with all those folks.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1355)

[English]

PEACEKEEPING SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my constituent, Harvey Beauvais, who has been awarded the Canadian peacekeeping service medal.

Harvey began his career with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency in 1982 after a 23 year career in the Canadian military, where he served in Europe working in intelligence.

During his career with customs, Harvey held positions that included customs inspector, acting customs superintendent and intelligence officer. Harvey is now retired and lives with his wife in Thorold, Ontario.

I congratulate Harvey for having done Canada proud.

* * *

IRAQ

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. I have always supported diplomacy as the first answer in ending the Iraqi crisis. However, in the last few days before the war began, it was apparent to me that diplomatic efforts had been exhausted. The Iraqi regime wilfully subverted every single UN resolution, despite numerous opportunities to comply. Saddam Hussein caused this war.

One hundred years ago, John Stuart Mills stated:

War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest thing. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse.

Closer to home, an Iraqi Canadian named Abdul stated the following in my local paper over the weekend:

If you have to choose between Saddam Hussein and anything else, you would choose anything else.

People like Abdul desperately want an end to the evil of Hussein's regime. It is time the government stopped sulking—

• (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax West.

* * *

GEORGE CHRISTIE

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 16 of this year the community of Bedford lost one of its shining lights. George Christie was a community pillar for almost 70 years.

Although Mr. Christie's list of accomplishments and contributions is far too long to enumerate here, a few items demand recognition.

A first lieutenant with the Halifax Rifles during World War I, George Christie returned to Bedford and took very active roles in his church and community. He was an honorary life elder at the Bedford United Church and helped countless young people become good citizens and community leaders through both the Air Cadets and Scouts Canada.

I want to express my appreciation for the life of George Christie and my sincere condolences to his family and friends. He will be surely missed.

[Translation]

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mothers in Canada and Quebec are very pleased with the parental leave program introduced by the Government of Canada. They are now staying at home twice as long as they did two years ago after giving birth. Fathers are also doing their share, with 10% of them temporarily trading their jobs for the pleasures of caring for the baby.

The Minister of Human Resources Development, who was behind these reforms, said that having a good start in life is wonderful for children. The federal Liberal minister and member for Brant said she was very touched to receive letters and pictures from new parents thanking her for this extra time they can spend with their children.

* * *

[English]

SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 21, leaders from the corporate sector, service organizations and all levels of government in Hamilton joined together at Liuna Station to mark the 10th anniversary of the Settlement and Integration Service Organization known as SISO.

SISO is the leading provider of settlement and integration services in Hamilton. It is a community based, client centred organization that provides language appropriate programs and services. It advocates for equity and change, and facilitates empowerment through improving access to knowledge and information.

SISO breaks down the barriers that often prevent immigrants from reaching their full potential as participants and contributors to Canada's prosperity and growth.

I commend SISO for the excellent service it has provided Hamiltonians over the last 10 years and wish it continued success in the years to come.

* * *

ROB SIVELL

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Rob Sivell, only 44, was a constituent of mine. Last week his life ended prematurely when a co-worker went on a shooting rampage in Yemen. The lives of an American and a Yemeni were also taken.

We send our prayers and condolences to his wife Lisa, his one year old twin daughters and his teenage son. Our nation grieves with this special family in their time of great loss.

His young daughters will forever miss the love and admiration of their father so important to the development of young and tender lives. His teenaged son will miss his guidance and support in his own struggle for manhood. His wife will miss his care, provision and support. His friends will miss his smile, his laugh and his easygoing manner.

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The world struggles with the tragedy of war raging in Iraq. The death of Rob Seville is a tragedy too. To his family, to his friends and to his neighbours in Buena Vista, Saskatchewan, it is a tragedy of enormous proportions when, not from war, but from simply providing for his family, Rob's life was lost.

* * *

BEN FRANKLIN

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in sadness to mark the passing this weekend of former Nepean mayor, Ben Franklin, who was a colleague and friend.

Ben Franklin was dedicated to building a great community. First elected to Nepean council in 1973, he served as mayor from 1978 until his retirement for health reasons in 1997.

Ben Franklin left an enormous legacy of achievement. He took a highly indebted and highly taxed bedroom community and transformed it into one of the most dynamic and best managed municipalities in Ontario, if not all of Canada.

However, Ben Franklin's accomplishments were so much more than simply the bottom line. He touched many lives because of his friendly manner and his desire to help people. As someone who served on his council for six years, I experienced firsthand how much Ben Franklin loved Nepean and how much Nepean loved Ben Franklin.

On behalf of all my constituents I would like to extend my deepest condolences and support to Ben's wife, Sherry, his daughter, Suzanne, and son, Brent.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

GENEVA CONVENTION

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, strikingly horrific pictures were broadcast by most major television networks. We saw footage of American prisoners of war being interviewed and pictures of bodies of dead soldiers. The night before, it was footage of Iraqi prisoners that was broadcast. Such are the horrors of war, and none of us wants to witness anything like that again.

I trust, therefore, that all the players in this conflict will abide by the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, of which the two warring nations are signatories; it provides that prisoners of war must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity.

Yesterday, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the depositary of the Geneva conventions, denounced the broadcast of pictures of American and Iraqi prisoners, pictures which are in violation of the convention.

We therefore urge the government to do everything in its power to ensure that both parties to the conflict apply and abide by the convention.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the environment is an integral part of our life and affects many aspects of our health, work and leisure. To ensure a healthy environment for our children, it is imperative that we preserve our forests.

The Agence régionale de mise en valeur des forêts privées de la Chaudière fully understands this and has developed a project to identify exceptional forest ecosystems on the territory of the Agence Chaudière and to put in place a program of voluntary conservation agreements with the owners in question.

Through the Ecoaction financial assistance program, this project received \$18,000 from the federal government and also received support from the Amiante RCM, the Government of Quebec, the Agence régionale de mise en valeur des forêts privées de la Chaudière and its accredited forestry advisers, including the Groupement forestier Beauce-Sud and the Groupe AgroForestier Lotbinière-Mégantic.

Cooperation between the three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—and of course the forest owners, is the key to success for any such project.

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[*English*]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last month members of Parliament received a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs indicating that the passport process would be streamlined and that the lengthy delays experienced since September 11 would be minimized.

To date there has been little or no improvement. My staff must deal with ever increasing casework on passports that now represent over 40% of my constituency work.

Frustrated constituents are anxious as to whether they will have their passports or have to forfeit their vacations. In many cases, passports only arrive the day before or the same day of travel. This creates considerable stress for all concerned. My office is also having difficulty accessing accurate information on these files.

Enough is enough. This situation is unacceptable and must be improved.

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ENVIRONMENT CANADA

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was extremely disappointed to hear the news that Environment Canada intends to move its forecast centre from Fredericton to Halifax. This will remove from the New Brunswick Weather Centre its primary function: providing weather forecasts and severe weather warnings for New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

In addition to providing that service, the New Brunswick Weather Centre provides 24 hour a day bilingual service, not only for New Brunswick but for the entire Atlantic region.

While I am pleased that the portion of the weather service that addresses environmental protection and conservation will remain in our province, I regret the extent of personnel change that the move from Fredericton will involve. I feel New Brunswickers are entitled to a more comprehensive service from within.

For those reasons I will continue to work with my colleagues, who represent the other eight offices affected, to convince the minister and Environment Canada to reconsider their position and keep the forecast centre in New Brunswick.

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WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Tuberculosis Day. On this important day the World Health Organization has announced the achievement of a major milestone in global efforts to fight the resurgent epidemic of tuberculosis.

Over 10 million TB patients have now been successfully treated under DOTS, the internationally recommended TB control strategy. Of these, more than 90% live in developing countries where the disease causes the most suffering, economic loss and death.

I would note as well that the TB epidemic is growing unabated in sub-Saharan Africa, where it is closely linked to HIV-AIDS and poverty, and in many of the newly independent states arising after the breakup of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, where it is exacerbated by poverty and social disruption. In some high HIV countries of sub-Saharan Africa, TB rates have quadrupled since the mid-1980s and threaten to overwhelm well established control programs.

Today I am calling on the Canadian government to put more resources into the global fight against tuberculosis and also to recognize that aboriginal communities in Canada and northern communities have rates of tuberculosis that are in many cases devastatingly high.

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● (1410)

[*Translation*]

ACTION WEEK AGAINST RACISM

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the last day of Action Week Against Racism. Created in March 2000 by a group of some 20 Quebec organizations, the aim of this week is to demystify racism and raise the level of understanding about this problem to better fight the phenomenon.

These days, racism is particularly noticeable in the work force. It is mostly women and visible minorities who are still the targets of discrimination. The latest statistics from Statistics Canada prove this. Recent immigrants earn much less than their Canadian-born counterparts, even ten years after they have been here. This is as much a problem for immigrants who are not well educated as for those who have a university degree.

Quebec has the most innovative policies to address all forms of racism. The Bloc Quebecois would like to congratulate the Government of Quebec for the inclusive measures it has put in place.

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[English]

ACHIEVEMENT IN GEOGRAPHY

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure and privilege to stand in the House and recognize outstanding Canadians and their achievements. Today I rise to acknowledge one such remarkable individual, Dr. Barry Wellar, professor of geography at the University of Ottawa.

The Association of American Geographers recently awarded Barry Wellar the James R. Anderson Medal of Honour in Applied Geography in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in applied geographic research and implementation.

For over 40 years Barry Wellar has pioneered research into projects ranging from satellite imagery and remote sensing to rural and urban development. I am proud to have had Barry Wellar contribute to the work of the Prime Minister's caucus task force on urban issues last year. He has brought the science of applied geography into public policy. His knowledge and expertise is sought the world over.

I ask members to join with me in congratulating Professor Barry Wellar on his special medal of honour.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the government is becoming famous for its downloading. The government downloads on the provinces, the provinces download on the municipalities, and the municipalities are left with the horrendous debts.

In relation to the infrastructure program, in the recent budget we heard an announcement of \$3 billion for infrastructure. It sounds like a lot of money until we are told that \$1 billion goes to special projects and \$2 billion is spread over ten years; ten years spread across the country does very little.

Again, it is a government of downloading and downsizing. Let us hope that the people of Canada take a lesson and start downsizing the government opposite.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN FIREARMS PROGRAM

Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Ind. BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning, the application and management of

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the firearms program has been nothing but a comedy of errors and administrative blunders. The negligence of the Minister of Justice and the officials who report to him could only have led straight to the financial disaster that was revealed last fall by the Auditor General.

Instead of trying to make changes to the program, changes that are cosmetic, the government should instead suspend it immediately in order to thoroughly clean up the mess and finally put an end to this waste of public money.

I therefore invite all members, government and opposition alike, to vote against granting an additional \$59 million to the Canadian firearms program tomorrow.

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[English]

SPORTS AWARDS

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this occasion to congratulate St. Catharines Athlete and Sportsperson of the Year recipients Liz Earley and Joe Corrigan.

In July 2002 Liz Earley won the Whirlpool Canadian PGA Women's Championship tournament at the St. Catharines Golf and Country Club, a course where she had been a member for 23 years, and in front of her friends and parents, Dave and Glenda Earley. Liz is a former scholarship golfer at the University of Central Florida and has been a professional golfer for 10 years. She finished the year at 14 on the Futures Tour money list, made 17 of 18 cuts and had three top 10 finishes.

Joe Corrigan has worked tirelessly to promote boxing in the St. Catharines community. Joe is a coach at the St. Catharines Boxing Club and worked to ensure an average of 25 boxing cards each year on the provincial, national and international levels. He also organized the 2002 Canadian Men's and Women's Boxing Championships, which were held for the first time in St. Catharines last year.

On behalf of the House of Commons, I wish to commend both Liz Earley and Joe Corrigan on their fine achievements and for being recognized for those accomplishments by my community, St. Catharines, Ontario.

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● (1415)

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members. Nowhere is the Liberal anti-family policy more evident than in its defence of child pornographers.

Oral Questions

The Canadian Alliance joins with the Canadian Police Association in calling for laws that protect our children from exploitation by older persons, including raising the age of consent to 16 and the need for a national sex offender registry to track all convicted sex offenders released into our neighbourhoods.

It is a tragedy that concerned Canadian parents have to call a U.S. government tip line to report child pornography and other suspicious activities on the Internet when people like Rebecca Warren and David Ellis at BytesCanada Incorporated, from Pembroke, and their tracking team have assisted in 131 arrests in spite of the federal government and could provide a made in Canada service.

It is clear that only a Canadian Alliance government will protect our children.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not rule out participation in the allied military campaign in Iraq. The government has now had the weekend to reflect on subsequent events and to reconsider its position. Is the government now prepared to stand with our American and British friends for the end of the rule of Saddam Hussein?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our position has always been that we believe very strongly that our American colleagues should be engaged in this activity through a multilateral process, which we urge. We continue to urge that conduct. We continue to maintain our policy. We will continue to act in a way which will strengthen the multilateral system because we believe strongly this is the best way that we will have a long term result, which is the benefit for the world and for Canadians.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we do not believe in sacrificing our friends and our interests to a veto of Jacques Chirac.

A reason the government should reconsider its position is that it appears some allied POWs may have been executed by Saddam's soldiers. It is certainly clear that Saddam's treatment of allied personnel is a blatant violation of the Geneva convention. Given these realities, does the government now regret that it is not standing with our American and British friends in the fight against Saddam?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the very principles the Leader of the Opposition has raised here are principles of international law and those are the very principles that have guided our conduct here today.

One cannot maintain on the one hand that certain behaviour must be in conformity with the international regime and not at the same time work on the multilateral system to make that regime apply. We will continue to work on that. We totally disapprove of any violation of the Geneva conventions. We have always taken and will continue to maintain that policy. We totally disapprove of any conduct that would violate the Geneva conventions.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, two world wars demonstrated that principles do not matter unless one is prepared to fight and stand for them.

Saddam is not just killing allied personnel. He is threatening his own people. He has placed military buildings inside residential areas. We have documented evidence of him using women and children as human shields. These are also violations of the Geneva convention.

When will the government reverse its decision to abandon our allies and fight Saddam?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the conduct of Canadian men and women in the field in two world wars demonstrated that this country and the people of this country are willing to fight for their principles and have never shied away from a fight, but we are willing to fight under terms which are supported by the Canadian population and which we believe are appropriate in the circumstances, and we will continue to have that conduct in spite of all these attacks from the opposition.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the state department indicated on Thursday in a press briefing that it had requested 62 nations, including Canada, to consider temporarily suspending Iraq's diplomatic presence in their countries. On Friday the foreign affairs minister claimed "...we have received no request from the United States...". I do not think and I hope the minister would not deliberately try to mislead the House but we have a serious discrepancy of information here, a serious communication in a time when one of our allies, at least, is at war.

Could the minister please explain this very serious discrepancy here? Two different reports, and he is on the wrong side, by the way.

• (1420)

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member will agree that I certainly have no intention of misleading the House. We have not had a formal request. I understand that the United States has issued a preference that all countries expel Iraqi diplomats. Frankly, we are looking at this in a way in which we believe we can make the best contribution to the long term resolution of this issue in the interests of the United States, in the interests of our allies and in the interests of Canada. We will continue to monitor the situation in the light of all those considerations.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, people around the world this weekend monitored on television some pretty horrific pictures gleefully displayed by Saddam Hussein's regime that showed Geneva convention violations regarding treatment of prisoners. These prisoners, these soldiers, are friends of ours. They are among our historic allies.

At the very least, since the government decided not to in any big way support this coalition of nations, we could send the diplomats home, back to Iraq. We will not even do that. Why not?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I made it very clear in the answer to the Leader of the Opposition that Canada's position has been totally, utterly, and absolutely against any violations of the Geneva convention. We support our American friends and allies on insisting that the Iraqi regime conform to international law. We will continue to do that.

We will be able to get our voice through to that regime by having contact with the regime. As always we will examine the best way to deal with this diplomatic matter in consultation with our American allies and in consideration of the best interests of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday 200,000 people marched in the streets of Montreal to say no to war in Iraq. The demonstrators expressed their support of Canada's decision not to take part in this illegal, illegitimate and unjustified war. But they called upon the federal government to go still further and to recall the Canadian military personnel working in Iraq.

Is the government going to heed the public and show some consistency with respect to Iraq by pulling out the Canadian soldiers who are in the theatre of operations?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's position is totally consistent. We support our allies in their war against terrorism. It is our war as well.

At a time when the Americans and the British are in need of our protection against terrorism in the gulf, the Bloc wants us to pull out. It wants Canada to withdraw just as the threat of terrorism is on the rise. That is not the position the Government of Canada has adopted.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is mixing up two things. In the battle against terrorism in Afghanistan, we did not call for the Canadian troops to be pulled out. The presence of Canadian troops within American and British battalions in Iraq, however, is not part of the battle against terrorism. It is an act of war within an unjustified war, to use the very words of the Prime Minister.

How can he say we are against an unjustified war and send troops to that same war, and then say there is no inconsistency in this? It makes no sense.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to repeat the answer I have just given, if the hon. member looks at a map of that region, he will see that the gulf region encompasses Afghanistan and Iraq. We are there to protect the allies from terrorists. The risk of it is high, which is one very important reason to remain there, and remain there we will.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, numerous pictures of American prisoners bring home the harsh reality of the war in Iraq. We realized that even logistics support units can be targets, just as offensive units can.

Does the Minister of National Defence, who refuses to pull out the Canadian soldiers integrated with the American and British units in Iraq, realize that the Canadian soldiers providing logistics support are performing exactly the same duties as the soldiers taken prisoner this weekend?

• (1425)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand this logic. We are very proud of the role played by our soldiers who are participating in this exchange. We have been doing this for decades. Cooperating with our allies is good for joint operations.

[*English*]

If we were to do what the member suggests, then at best we would be offending our allies, and at worst we would be putting the lives of allied soldiers at risk. We are not prepared to do either of those things.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has a rather odd way of looking at things.

Does he realize that the Canadian soldiers, who were left in American and British units, are fighting the war as we speak? They are in a combat situation. And even if Canada opposes the war, these soldiers are fighting in it. Let him explain that.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have explained many times that we have an extremely strong alliance with the Americans and the British. We have been taking part in the war on terrorism and we will continue to do so. We do not want to send the wrong message to our allies. We do not want to endanger our allies' soldiers by pulling out our soldiers. That is something we will not do.

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Parliament voted for Canada not to involve itself in Bush's war. Yet we have Canadian ships travelling as far north as Kuwait escorting ships of war. If that is not involvement, then what is?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said last week that the NDP does not get it. I do not think it has learned very much over the weekend.

The NDP should understand that we are there for the long haul in the war against terrorism. Beginning September 11 that war and the defence of the continent went overseas. We were there in Afghanistan with our allies. At one point we were the fourth largest contingent. We are now leading a multinational naval task force. The risk of terrorism has increased and now more than ever it is important that we stay there.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yet again the Minister of National Defence has not been able to tell us where Operation Apollo ends and where Bush's war begins. What is deadly dangerous to our troops is this kind of confusion. On March 18 the Prime Minister said that Canadian troops will not be involved in Iraq.

I ask the defence minister again, if escorting ships of war in the gulf is not involvement, then what is?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP reminds me a little bit of the leader of the fifth party, suggesting the rules of engagement in matters that could put the security of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and women at risk should be announced in the House to the world.

Oral Questions

I cannot say exactly where our ships are or what the area of operation is because that would put our people at risk. That is the last thing that I am about to do.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, last week Iraq fired one, perhaps two, Scud-B missiles at Kuwait. These are missiles which Iraq denied having. Yesterday there were two more discoveries of proscribed weapons: a suspected chemical weapons facility and Russian weapons near Basra.

Does the Government of Canada consider these discoveries to be a further material breach of UN resolutions? Does it consider them to be proof that Saddam deliberately concealed weapons of mass destruction from UN inspectors? Does that evidence change Canada's position not to participate?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share the view that was expressed in the House as follows:

Of all countries, Canada should not be ambiguous about our respect for the United Nations and for international law. We should be clear now that we will act only within the context of initiatives sanctioned by the Security Council.

That was the leader of the Conservative Party speaking in the House on January 29.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1430)

The Speaker: Order, please. We would not want to waste time. We will want to hear the next question by the right hon. gentleman and he has the floor.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Precisely, Mr. Speaker, and my view of the law on the matter was upheld and repeated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the government on Friday.

The United Nations needs a Security Council resolution to lead reconstruction in Iraq. Last week the Prime Minister wanted to wait until the bombs were dropping before Canada acted. That leaves reconstruction to the Pentagon which is dropping the bombs that the Prime Minister was waiting for. The British are seeking a Security Council resolution and Japan has committed at least \$100 million to work under UN auspices.

What is the Prime Minister of Canada waiting for now? Will the government spell out exactly—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister for International Cooperation.

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has indicated that Canada will be providing humanitarian assistance as well as support for reconstruction efforts undertaken in a multilateral context. We will be working very closely with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to plan the delivery of humanitarian aid in Iraq.

We are expecting an appeal this week on Wednesday from the United Nations on that very subject and we have committed ourselves to be there after for reconstruction.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the allied coalition forces are going out of their way to avoid civilian casualties. Saddam Hussein goes out of his

way to endanger his own people. He is now using women and children as human shields. Previously, he has used chemical weapons to wipe out large segments of the Iraqi population.

What will it take for the government to change its mind and join our allies to disarm Saddam?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear that we totally disapprove of any violation of the rules of war by Iraq and we will continue to convey that measure.

I subscribe to the observation by the hon. member that the United States has been extremely cautious about the way in which it has tried to avoid civilian casualties. We very much respect how the United States is conducting itself and we will support it in every way we possibly can to ensure that Iraq observes the rules of war as they should be observed.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that still does not excuse the government's absence on this issue. It has been proven that Saddam Hussein has engaged in a campaign of genocide against the Iraqi people. His refusal to disarm has led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis over the past 12 years.

How many more people will have to die until the government feels it is justified to support the allied coalition that is currently freeing the people of Iraq?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before in my answers to the House, we supported resolution 1441. We supported the United States, Great Britain and others in working through the multilateral process to achieve the aim, which I believe all members of this House and all members around the world wish to achieve, which is the disarmament of Saddam Hussein.

What we are seeking to do is through a different path than that followed by the United States, but one that is equally valid in terms of international relations, and we will continue to seek that path. It is a Canadian path and it is one that we are proud of.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the soldiers from the logistical units who were taken prisoner could very well have been Canadian soldiers. The whole world could have learned that one or more of the soldiers taken prisoner came from Canada, when Canada is not even at war. How does that make sense?

By making the mistake of not withdrawing Canadian soldiers from the American and British units in which they are integrated, does the government's position not become a clear contradiction? Canada is not taking part in the war, yet its soldiers are.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wants us to withdraw soldiers, the consequences of which would result in increasing the risk for our allies' soldiers.

The Bloc Québécois wants us to withdraw our ships, right when the risk of terrorism is increasing. This, too, would increase the risk for our allies' ships.

Canada supports the allies. We will not exercise either one of the options the Bloc Québécois supports.

• (1435)

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the more the minister talks, the more he demonstrates that he is at war with Iraq. That is what the minister is saying.

The Prime Minister described the war as unjustified because it was not being carried out under the UN. How can the Prime Minister now justify accepting that Canadian soldiers are taking part in a war that is unjustified?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are taking part in a war, but it is the war against terrorism. We are taking part in the war against terrorism, and we are very proud of this fact.

[English]

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we all know that Saddam's regime is probably the most brutal in the world, responsible for over a million deaths including 100,000 of his own civilians. There have been efforts to create an international criminal tribunal through the United Nations to indict Saddam and his thugs for crimes against humanity. Those efforts have been derailed by threatened vetoes by Russia and France, according to Human Rights Watch, because of their extensive business interests in Iraq.

Is it the position of the government that there should be a special tribunal created by the Security Council or is it willing to not support it because of France's threatened veto?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government and the Canadian people, and Canada in general, have demonstrated the desire to see international law applied by our strong support for the establishment of the international criminal court. Of course, we would look at ways in which the international community could come around to a solution to having an internationally established tribunal which could judge war crimes by those responsible in Iraq.

Any suggestions that the government does not recognize the danger of Iraq, the danger of Saddam Hussein, and participants in the regime are totally erroneous. We too wish to see them brought to justice in accordance with the rules of law.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, not only is Canada standing on the sidelines right now rather than joining the effort to liberate Iraqis and bring Saddam to justice but we have done precisely nothing at the United Nations to advance the creation of a criminal tribunal. Indeed on Friday, the government vetoed a motion in this House to create such a tribunal.

Given that France is again threatening to veto the creation of such a tribunal, will the government be consistent with its position on the war and refuse to support bringing Saddam to justice because Jacques Chirac is against it?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government vetoed no such thing in the House of Commons on Friday. No notice of motion was provided and no consultations between parties have ever taken place in this regard. The hon.

Oral Questions

member is playing a little fast and loose with the facts when he makes the gratuitous statement he just made.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs reiterated that he feels the post-war administration of Iraq should come under the aegis of the United Nations and we agree. However, he must put his words into action.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us what concrete measures Canada has taken so far to ensure that the reconstruction of Iraq is carried out under the UN's authority?

[English]

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said and has stated in the House, Canada hopes every country will do its part for reconstruction efforts. Of course we expect the United States to be part of this but Canada also will work in collaboration with other countries under the umbrella of the United Nations.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not what I asked. We know that the U.S. administration is currently awarding lucrative contracts to major American and British firms.

If the Minister of Foreign Affairs' commitment in this House is to mean anything, should he not immediately raise this extremely troubling situation in the United States with the United Nations?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously we are in the middle of a conflict. I can assure the House and all Canadians that we will do our best to ensure that the post-war reconstruction of Iraq is carried out in accordance with international rules and out under international authority.

Naturally, we will work together with our friends and allies, the Americans and the British, to ensure that Mr. Bush follows through with what he said in the Azores, namely that the United Nations will play a role in the reconstruction of Iraq.

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• (1440)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence continues to dismiss an internal defence department report that raises very serious concerns about the safety and the capability of the Sea King helicopter.

The report was prepared by air force Captain Eric Hill, whose job it was to research key Sea King deficiencies, and it included the testimony of those who worked with the Sea Kings on a regular basis.

Is the minister saying that the work done by these expert Canadian Forces members is not accurate and that these people are not competent?

Oral Questions

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing I dismiss is the credibility of the hon. member himself on the subject of Sea Kings. As I have told him repeatedly, I have received the assurances of the chief of defence staff, a former helicopter pilot, and of three other helicopter pilots that these are indeed safe, and we have seen them carry out at least 2,000 missions in the war against terrorism.

Sadly, events of recent days and weeks indicate to all of us that there is an inherent risk in flying in general, and in flying helicopters in particular, and we must all be conscious of that risk.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, will the minister have the chief of defence staff overrule all the reports done by experts who have done work like this report on the Sea Kings? Is that what he will do?

Captain Hill, who compiled this damning report regarding the dangers and deficiencies of the Sea King night vision equipment, is an expert who was assigned to find deficiencies in the Sea Kings. That is his job.

Why is the minister attacking the reputation of Captain Hill and all those who gave input in his report? He should be ashamed of himself.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was not attacking the reputation of Captain Hill. I did not mention his name. I suppose if there was one person whose reputation I could be accused of attacking, it is the hon. member himself since I suggested that he was lacking credibility on the subject of the safety of Sea Kings.

The chief of defence staff has authority on this matter by virtue of the fact that he is the chief of the defence staff and this report is in the process of being reviewed by the appropriate authorities in the usual way.

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HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World TB Day. This highly contagious disease has even begun to resurface in Canada. Globally between two million to three million people die each year from tuberculosis, one person every 10 seconds. Tuberculosis has always been virulently endemic in foreign developing countries. In India alone, 5,000 people develop active TB every day.

Could the Minister for International Cooperation tell the House what the Government of Canada is doing to support the fight against tuberculosis in developing countries?

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency, has taken a leadership role in the fight against tuberculosis in developing countries.

We have made a real difference in the lives of millions of people who have come into contact with this disease each and every year. We have committed \$80 million over the next four years to the Stop TB Partnership, and I announced today that we will contribute \$10.4 million of that to treat and control the spread of the disease of

tuberculosis in developing countries. This new money will have an immediate impact in the lives of over 100 million people.

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IRAQ

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the government is as follows. During the gulf war in 1991, then NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin was named a member of the Privy Council so she could be briefed on Canada's involvement in the war. As one of only two members of the opposition who is a privy councillor, I ask the government why have I not yet been briefed on Canada's involvement in this war?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it may have been noticed by the hon. member that we are not combatants at the present time, as we were in 1990-91. He will know that if there is information which we believe would be helpful to certain senior parliamentarians in conducting themselves in the House of Commons, those matters will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

• (1445)

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government cannot have it both ways. If we are not involved in this war, why are we then escorting the ships of war and why do we have military personnel on an exchange program in George Bush's war? Since we are involved because of these issues, why have privy councillors in the opposition not been fully briefed on these two specific issues, among others, in the war?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the NDP have us withdraw our exchange soldiers? Given that this would put the lives of the soldiers of our allies at risk, this would be a callous act. Would the NDP have us take our ships back at the moment when the risk has gone up? That would be a cowardly act.

The government will do neither of those things because the government is neither callous nor cowardly.

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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice promised Parliament that he would make public the total cost of the firearms registry prior to the registry being shuffled over to the rookie Solicitor General.

Will the Minister of Justice guarantee the House that he will actually table the report before we vote on any more money going to the failed registry? Tomorrow we vote. Is this another broken Liberal promise or does he have an answer?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, essentially as we all know we have been facing the report of the Auditor General since before Christmas. What we said was that we were proceeding with two reports to look at the management of the program. Those two reports have been tabled. We have seen those recommendations.

Oral Questions

Over the past few weeks we have tabled a good plan of action to ensure that in the future we will, together, be able to proceed with that program which is about public safety. We have tabled as well the supplementary estimates (B) for this year and for the next fiscal year as well. People will be supporting the government tomorrow on that.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, Air Canada is in trouble. Could the Minister of Transport inform the House whether the government is considering any scenario where it will buy shares in Air Canada?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation facing the aviation industry worldwide is extremely serious. Of course Air Canada is not exempt from that. We have seen what is happening in the United States.

We are continuing to work with the industry. We are monitoring the situation and in particular with respect to Air Canada we are prepared to discuss with it any options that might make the situation better.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian troops are still flying the 40 year old Sea King helicopters the government should have replaced a full 10 years ago.

Last week a report surfaced quoting a number of serious safety concerns regarding the aging craft. Now we learn there is a shortage of skilled mechanics to maintain these geriatric Sea Kings.

When will the minister address the Liberal government's royal Canadian air farce?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for once the opposition is right. There is a shortage of mechanics, for two reasons. One, this was part of the \$1 billion sustainability gap which was closed in the last budget. More resources will be going into this area.

Second, we have been the victim of our own success. Because the Canadian economy has created more than half a million jobs over the last years, many sectors of the economy are having difficulty attracting skilled labour, and we are one of those sectors trying to attract that skilled labour.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is a nice try. There is a gap there, that is for sure. I think it is his enormous cuts.

First, the Prime Minister threw a wrench in the plans when he cancelled the Sea Kings in 1993. He said that the old ones could keep going with a lot of maintenance, and I do mean a lot of maintenance, like 30 hours for every 1 hour of flight.

Now we do not even have these skilled mechanics required to keep these dinosaurs airborne; it takes four years to train them.

When will mister fix-it here stop tooling around and give our military the resources it is so desperately seeking?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like that second question was written before she received the answer to the first because I have already explained that \$1 billion has been put in to eliminate the sustainability gap and that will permit the resources to get more mechanics.

The other thing is the Canadian economy has been so hugely successful that many sectors of the economy, including the military, have trouble attracting skilled labour.

Would the hon. member prefer that instead of creating half a million new jobs, Canada was plunged into recession? Then there might be more mechanics available.

* * *

● (1450)

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Agriculture claim to be beyond reproach as champions of the supply management system.

How can they reconcile claiming to be bulwarks of the supply management system and systematically allowing milk products that eat away our milk producers' market share to come into the country?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, during the negotiations at the World Trade Organization, we always stand 100% behind the supply management system.

This is a system in which we believe, a system in which we want to continue working very closely with milk producers.

The Minister of Agriculture and I have set up a working committee with representatives from the industry. We recently received a number of demands from them. We will be answering them soon with respect to the demands to which the hon. member is referring.

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that by putting an end to his unacceptable tolerance toward the import of milk substitutes, he could ensure that plants like the ones in Chambord and in Saint-Alexandre-de-Kamouraska are properly supplied?

Is that not the kind of action to protect the supply management system producers have the right to expect from the federal government?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have looked at several of these points. The Minister of Agriculture and I will react officially to a number of demands, such as the one about butter oil. We did so in the past on the cheese stick issue.

What matters is that the market for milk producers be developed. It is important to develop the market for them. I think there is also work to be done in that regard.

Oral Questions

At the request of producers, we have already gone to the international court with the butter oil issue. Unfortunately, we lost at the time. We will continue working with them and trying to find solutions, but have already taken action.

* * *

[English]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport seems to think the problems with the air industry began with the Iraq war. In fact, they began when he became transport minister: air taxes, fuel taxes, no open skies, landing fees, airport improvement fees. The fees, taxes and charges on flying in this country total some \$400 million. While the government taxes the air industry into the ground, it subsidizes the rail industry through corporate welfare.

Why are the government and the transport minister surprised that Air Canada and the air industry are having problems when their policy is to tax the air industry and to tax travellers to subsidize alternative forms of travelling, through corporate welfare to rail?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a rather convoluted question. I am not sure whether or not the hon. member is advocating that user fees not be applied to the air industry. Perhaps they want all these costs borne on the treasury, but this is from a party that believes there should be no additions made to the deficit.

As this debate unfolds in the coming weeks I hope the opposition and other parties will be somewhat rational in their criticisms and work with us to find a solution for the benefit of everyone in the airline industry.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in response to all this the transport minister has created a committee to study possible solutions. Just what we need, another committee.

The three things that this government could do today in order to help right the airline industry's problems are: first, eliminate the Air Canada Public Participation Act which puts Air Canada at a competitive regulatory disadvantage; second, eliminate the taxes and fees that are hammering the airline industry; and third, show some leadership in creating an open skies agreement that air carriers in the United States want to see happen.

Why is it that after six years of being transport minister the minister's only response to do anything is to study, study, study and to show zero leadership?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that the official opposition in 1999 supported the government, as did all opposition parties, with the restructuring of the airline industry and the absorption of Canadian Airlines by Air Canada.

The official opposition in 1999 did not want to see the bankruptcy of Canadian Airlines. Is he now saying that they are prepared for the bankruptcy of Air Canada?

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Cape Bretoner, I am extremely proud of the role our national parks have in our communities.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage please explain how the announcement today will help Cape Breton?

• (1455)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and all members of the House for the tremendous job they have done in securing \$411 million of new investment in the national parks system.

The single largest investment in national parks in the history of our country, it will pave the way for the long awaited completion of the national parks system and include five marine conservation areas. It will indeed ensure that Parks Canada, the first parks system in the world, will continue to be the best.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last week the Treasury Board president could not tell us how much the gun registry has cost so far. The Auditor General said that she was still waiting for the government's report on the total costs.

Before the Prime Minister whips his MPs into tears and forces them to approve another \$59 million, should he not tell them how much the gun registry has cost so far?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they know very well what the numbers are. As a matter of fact, I was at the public accounts committee for a few hours and I would just like to raise the fact that they have not asked the question.

If we look at it over the seven years of operation, it means that in the last fiscal year, we are talking about \$688 million. This fiscal year we are talking about \$100 million. If we look at supplementary estimates (B) we are talking about \$59 million, which is part of the \$100 million. For the next fiscal years, they know the numbers. They have seen the budget. We are talking about \$113 million. The numbers are clear.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the Library of Parliament reported that the costs to enforce the gun registry could be a billion dollars in the next few years. We do not know how much the gun registry has cost so far. We do not know how much it is going to cost in the future to implement.

Why is the Prime Minister forcing his MPs to vote more money for this firearms fiasco? Why?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all government programs somewhere down the road, if they are permanent programs, will cost a billion dollars. However we are talking about, as I said, the last fiscal year. We are talking about seven years of operation. We are talking about an amount of \$688 million.

Now if they are talking about the estimates for this year, we are talking about \$100 million. For next year it is \$113 million. However we are talking about public safety. We are talking about a good program that we will keep supporting as a party and as a government.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN TELEVISION FUND

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, the Minister of Canadian Heritage let her colleague, the Minister of Finance, cut the Canadian television fund by \$25 million. Instead of \$100 million, the fund has only \$75 million per year for the next two years.

How can the Minister of Canadian Heritage reconcile the goal to promote television production in Canada with the fact that she has not hesitated to cut the necessary funding for the Canadian television fund? This does not make any sense.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian television fund is a \$200 million fund that was created by a partnership between the public and private sectors.

This year, we will have over \$200 million because the private sector has increased its contribution, which allows us—instead of investing in the public sector television fund—to invest in the CBC.

* * *

[English]

POLICE FUNDING

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, funding for police services topped the Canadian Police Association's March 25 lobby day agenda.

Municipal and provincial police, together with the RCMP from all across the country have repeatedly been denied substantive budget increases, while the demand for their services has increased substantially, especially since 9/11.

The government thinks nothing of throwing a billion dollars at a failed gun registry and coming back to Parliament and asking for more.

My question is for the Solicitor General. Tomorrow when the Canadian Police Association comes knocking will their demands for increased funding fall on receptive ears? Yes or no.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had a good session with the Canadian Police Association this morning in which I spoke to their meeting and talked about all the things that we are doing as a government in terms of improving policing and law enforcement in the country, including the amount

Oral Questions

of money that we are putting into anti-terrorism, organized crime, child pornography and the list goes on and on.

I think, through the question and answer period, it was a feeling to me that we were doing a reasonably good job of ensuring the safety of Canadians.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

MONT-LOUIS WHARF

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the breakwater and the front of the Fisheries and Oceans wharf at Mont-Louis in the Gaspé are in need of major repairs. Access to a properly maintained and safe wharf is essential to the seafood processing plant.

The people of Mont-Louis are waiting for a decision. When does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans plan to announce the timeframe for the wharf upgrade and maintenance plan?

Mr. Georges Farrah (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, the small craft harbours program for this year has not yet been announced, but it will be forthcoming quite soon. This is about the time of year that the announcements are made.

Given the importance of this matter, the minister will surely take note of it and will advise us accordingly, in due course.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems unbelievable that yet again Canadian seniors are being ripped off by HRDC. First it was the GIS and now it is 20,000 seniors who are being shortchanged on their CPP.

How can the minister justify denying these seniors full retroactivity? Why is her department not preventing this problem from happening in the first place?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that all who are qualified receive the Canada pension benefits to which they are eligible.

The facts are these. Every single year we mail old age security and Canada pension plan applications to people who are turning 64 so they can apply for benefits. The fact is that every year we send information on our pension programs with CPP and OAS T4 statements to 4.5 million Canadians.

Every year we distribute some 250,000 brochures and fact sheets across Canada at various seniors events and through our human resources centres.

I would like to thank all the members of Parliament who, on a regular basis, speak with their constituents to provide them with important information.

*Speaker's Ruling***PRIVILEGE**

FIREARMS PROGRAM—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast on March 17 regarding his claim that the President of the Treasury Board misled the House concerning the use of the expression “major crown project” in relation to the Canadian firearms program.

I would like to thank the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast for having raised this matter, as well as the hon. President of the Treasury Board, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for their comments. I would also like to thank the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for the documentation he supplied to the Chair.

In his presentation, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast alleged that the President of the Treasury Board had misled the House in a reply made to an oral question on February 25, 2003. In response to a question posed by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, the hon. President of the Treasury Board stated:

Mr. Speaker, according to my information the program was not formally designated as a major crown project.

I urge hon. members to read the *Debates* for February 25, 2003 at page 3985 to see this answer in print.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast contrasted that statement with statements made in the Auditor General's letter of February 26, 2003 to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has kindly provided the Chair with a copy of that letter and I have noted with great interest the references there to various documents of the Department of Justice and the Treasury Board where the term “major Crown project” has been used with reference to the Canadian Firearms Program.

[*English*]

In the letter, the Auditor General outlines a number of occasions, beginning in 1998, in which formal documents concerning project approval that were passed between the justice department and the Treasury Board Secretariat either describe the program as a major crown project or indicate that it will be managed as such. Moreover, the letter points out that in response to documents submitted for comment by her office to the justice department and the Treasury Board Secretariat during 2002, no exception was taken to the use of the expression “major crown project”. On one occasion, in fact, the Treasury Board Secretariat requested that the expression “major capital project” be altered to read “major crown project”. It was only last month, in February 2003, that the justice department began to object to the use of the expression “major crown project” to designate the Canadian firearms program.

[*Translation*]

The hon. President of the Treasury Board responded to the charge made by the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast by stating that in her reply to the original question she was pointing out

to the House that the program had never been formally designated as a major Crown project.

She went on to explain that such formal designation would have involved a decision of the ministers who comprise the Treasury Board, adding, in the *Debates*, on March 17, 2003:

To my knowledge, after an examination by my senior officials of all Treasury Board records and decisions, there has never been a written decision by Treasury Board formally designating this project as a major Crown project.

● (1505)

[*English*]

On examining the statements made here in the House and the additional information submitted to me, it seems to your Speaker that the Department of Justice and the Treasury Board Secretariat were prepared to regard the firearms program as a major crown project, or at least, were prepared to agree that it should be managed as though it were such a project. The House is now informed that such a designation was never formally made by the Treasury Board and that it is therefore incorrect to apply it to the firearms program.

As the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader pointed out, the decision to designate or not to designate a program as a major crown project is a prerogative of the government. Based on that decision, the government may require a different level or a different type of management structure and may impose reporting requirements that do not apply in other cases. All of these are matters that are internal to the government's administration. They are not matters of privilege. The House may choose to exercise its right of oversight of government activities to pursue these matters, but that does not require intervention by the Chair.

These are no doubt critical questions for hon. members and for the House, but they are not questions for your Speaker to resolve. Just as it is not up to the Chair to settle the dispute surrounding the issue of the proper designation of the firearms program, it is not the role of your Speaker to determine the consequences for good or ill of its designation. Rather, as Speaker, I am being asked to ensure that the privileges of the House have not been breached. In the circumstances of this case, the only argument for such a breach is the allegation that the President of the Treasury Board deliberately misled the House.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast cited a precedent where prima facie privilege was found in a case where a minister made a statement at one time and a different assertion on another occasion, but the precedent is not helpful in this case because there has been no inconsistency in the statements of the President of the Treasury Board. She has not said one thing at one time and something different at another time; she has been clear, stating only that the Treasury Board did not formally designate the Canadian firearms program as a major crown project. The Chair has not been presented with any evidence to indicate that that statement is incorrect. Others may have had differing views on whether or not this was the program designation, but their views are irrelevant to the narrow question of privilege that is before the Chair. On that question, I have concluded that the House has not been misled by the President of the Treasury Board and there is therefore no breach of the privileges of the House.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

•(1510)
[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, in both official languages, regarding the membership of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. If the House gives its consent, I move that the 23rd report be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP) moved:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights presented on Wednesday, February 26, 2003 be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has commenced its study of Bill C-250, a bill to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda provisions), to include sexual orientation. The committee has unanimously adopted a motion asking the House to give it an additional 30 sitting days within which to consider evidence on the bill.

The purpose of the concurrence motion today is simply to implement that all party recommendation of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and to give us the additional 30 sitting days in order to hear evidence on this important legislation.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the government House leader apparently is now willing to grant consent to the following motion. I therefore seek unanimous consent that, in the opinion of this House, the government should endorse the formation of an international criminal tribunal for the purpose of prosecuting Saddam Hussein and all other Iraqi officials who are responsible for crimes against humanity, including unlawful use of force, crimes committed in contravention of the Geneva convention and the crime of genocide.

I seek unanimous consent of the House to concur in this motion.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Calgary Southeast have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. government House leader.

Hon. Don Boudria: No, Mr. Speaker. In fact I did indicate to the hon. member on Friday that if he did have such a request, he should make it on Tuesday through his House leader, through the regular channel. That is exactly what I said on Friday and what I repeated in question period today. What he just said a moment ago, that I had apparently changed my mind to consider his motion, is factually incorrect again.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADIAN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COLLEGE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke I am presenting a petition from the people of Arnprior, Glasgow Station and Deep River requesting that Parliament recognize that the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College is essential to training Canadians for emergency situations, that the facility should stay in Arnprior and that the government should upgrade the facility in order to provide the necessary training to Canadians.

* * *

•(1515)

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 129, 134, 135, 137, 138, 145 and 150 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed that the lengthy list of questions read out by the hon. parliamentary secretary be made orders for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 129—**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:**

For the fiscal years 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, from all departments and agencies of the government, including crown corporations and quasi/non-governmental agencies funded by the government, and not including research and student-related grants and loans, what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in the constituency of Edmonton—Strathcona, including the name and address of the recipient, whether or not it was competitively awarded, the date, the amount and the type of funding, and if repayable, whether or not it has been repaid?

Return tabled.

Question No. 134—**Mr. Keith Martin:**

For the fiscal years 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 et 2000-2001, from all departments and agencies of the government, including crown corporations and quasi/non-governmental agencies funded by the government, and not including research and student-related grants and loans, what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in the constituency of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, including the name and address of the recipient, whether or not it was competitively awarded, the date, the amount and the type of funding, and if repayable, whether or not it has been repaid?

Return tabled.

*Government Orders***Question No. 135—Mr. Dale Johnston:**

For the fiscal years 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 et 2000-2001, from all departments and agencies of the government, including crown corporations and quasi/non-governmental agencies funded by the government, and not including research and student-related grants and loans, what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in the constituency of Wetaskiwin, including the name and address of the recipient, whether or not it was competitively awarded, the date, the amount and the type of funding, and if repayable, whether or not it has been repaid?

Return tabled.

Question No. 137—Mrs. Betty Hinton:

For the fiscal years 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 et 2000-2001, from all departments and agencies of the government, including crown corporations and quasi/non-governmental agencies funded by the government, and not including research and student-related grants and loans, what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in the constituency of Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, including the name and address of the recipient, whether or not it was competitively awarded, the date, the amount and the type of funding, and if repayable, whether or not it has been repaid?

Return tabled.

Question No. 138—Mr. Werner Schmidt:

For the fiscal years 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 et 2000-2001, from all departments and agencies of the government, including crown corporations and quasi/non-governmental agencies funded by the government, and not including research and student-related grants and loans, what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in the constituency of Kelowna, including the name and address of the recipient, whether or not it was competitively awarded, the date, the amount and the type of funding, and if repayable, whether or not it has been repaid?

Return tabled.

Question No. 145—Mr. John Williams:

With regard to vehicles purchased for the use of the Federal Court of Canada and Supreme Court of Canada justices: (a) what type of vehicle is currently being utilized; (b) when were they purchased; (c) how much did each vehicle cost; (d) how many vehicles are there; (e) how many kilometers are on each vehicle; (f) is the Federal Court planning on purchasing new vehicles; (g) if so, for what reason(s) is the Federal Court planning on purchasing new vehicles; (h) is the Supreme Court planning on purchasing new vehicles; (i) if so, for what reason(s) is the Supreme Court planning on purchasing new vehicles; and (j) do Canada's commitments under the Kyoto Protocol have anything to do with the purchase or planned purchase of new vehicles for the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of Canada?

Return tabled

Question No. 150—Mr. Ted White:

With respect to the government's National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, what are the results of the review or reviews, due to have been completed by November of 2002, which have been carried out in order to determine whether any of the 1,900 crime prevention projects funded since 1998 have produced the intended results, and whether certain types of programme are more effective than others, and can the government identify the programmes which have resulted in measurably different reductions in crime and improvements in community safety when compared with areas which have not used those programmes?

Return tabled.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 39(5) to inform the House that the matter of the failure of the minister to respond to the following questions on the order paper is deemed referred to several standing committees of the House as follows:

Question No. 130, standing in the name of the hon. member for Calgary West, to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates;

Question No. 133, standing in the name of the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates; and

Question No. 136, standing in the name of the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you would find unanimous consent to return to motions to set a time tomorrow for the votes that are supposed to take place tonight.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to return to motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Reynolds (House Leader of the Official Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent that any votes that may take place after our opposition day today would be held tomorrow immediately following question period.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY**ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: There are five minutes remaining in the questions and comments period for the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to quote a statement by Rev. Kenneth Joseph, a pastor of the Assyrian Church of the East who went to Iraq recently as a human shield. He said that his "trip to Iraq had shocked me back to reality". He said that some of the Iraqis he had interviewed on camera "told me they would commit suicide if American bombing didn't start. They were willing to see their homes demolished to gain their freedom from Saddam Hussein's bloody tyranny". Rev. Joseph said that the Iraqis convinced him that Saddam is "a monster the likes of which the world had not seen since Stalin and Hitler. He and his sons are sick sadists".

I wonder if the member could respond to those remarks of a former human shield in Iraq.

Government Orders

The member dwelt at great length on what he characterizes as the illegality of this war. I infer from that, and perhaps he could confirm, that he therefore believes that the current Baath regime in Iraq is a legitimate and legal one. If he does believe that in this reactionary attachment to Westphalian notions of national sovereignty which he seems to hold, is he willing to tell us that if the current regime in Iraq is deposed by force in the current military action, would he like this legal and licit regime to be restored? Will he be consistent? Will his position be that the removal of this regime is illicit, therefore the regime should remain in power? Is that the position he is taking, that the Saddam regime is a legal one that must remain in power because it is a sovereign government?

Hon. Lorne Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could start off by quoting myself. This is what I have said publicly about Saddam Hussein.

Let me make it clear that Saddam Hussein is a dangerous thug and a brutal dictator. He is guilty of human rights abuses and atrocities against his own citizens. He rules the people of Iraq through fear and intimidation. He is a war criminal worthy only of our utter contempt. That is my position on Saddam Hussein.

However a couple of wrongs do not make it right. What has happened is there is a clear violation of international law by George Bush. Henry Kissinger who was the national security adviser to President Nixon, another Republican president, who is a right winger, a Republican, has said that what is happening today is an illegal war, it is a violation of international law. That is what George Bush is doing and that is what Tony Blair is doing.

Either we believe in the rule of law or we do not. The Alliance Party talks a lot about law and order, yet it is ready here to flaunt international law. Where do we stop?

It is Iraq today. There are many other countries that have dictators. In fact the majority of the world is run by dictators. Some of them are also thugs. Where do we go next? Is it North Korea? Is it Saudi Arabia? Is it Iran? Is it Libya? Where do we go next?

I remind my friend across the way that the Americans started off by supporting Saddam Hussein. It was Ronald Reagan who made sure some of the chemicals that were used in Iraq in terms of chemical warfare were allowed to be sold to Saddam Hussein. The Americans support many of the despots, dictators and thugs around the world. The list goes on and on.

I am so surprised that my friend from Calgary who is an intelligent man is so gullible to be sucked into this belief that George Bush is right on this one. He is wrong. He is violating international law. It is an illegal war. Tony Blair is wrong. If Tony Blair did not back George Bush, Bush would not have the legitimacy in the United States to conduct this war.

What is happening here is immoral, it is illegal and it is wrong. People, from Cronkite to Schwarzkopf to the Pope to most of the churches in the world, agree with that position.

• (1520)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, to be quite honest I just cannot believe it, having been in this place for nine years, listening to the ridiculous

statements coming from the New Democratic Party to date just astounds me.

On one hand the member agrees with the Canadian Alliance that Saddam Hussein is “a dangerous thug, a dictator”, yet on the other hand the member is quite willing to let him continue to commit the genocide of his own people, to be a constant threat to the entire world, certainly to the Middle East, and do nothing about it.

If the New Democratic Party had its way, Saddam Hussein would still be in Kuwait because it would not do anything to remove this man.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I thought the Alliance believed in some semblance of law and order. What he is saying here is that George Bush is a policeman of the world. What George Bush thinks is wrong, he attacks. Where does he go next, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Libya? Where does he go next?

We need the United Nations because it is an international body. What George Bush has done is violate international law. He has committed a wrong. Henry Kissinger and international law experts have said that. If the Alliance does not support the rule of law, if it believes in violation of international law, then it should answer to the Canadian people.

The last point is that people in Alliance ridings oppose this war. The Alliance is supposed to represent the grassroots of Canada and yet it stands up against its own people. I say shame on the Alliance.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, like everybody else who participates in this debate, I will say that it is probably a debate we would rather not have to participate in. However, the action is going on and that is why we are here to discuss such issues.

Having listened to the recent speeches from members of the New Democratic Party, I am wondering from which authority they are getting the idea that this is not a legal war. Our own Prime Minister, from whom we should be able to take direction, has said quite clearly in the House that the war is legitimate. The leader of our party, the right hon. member for Calgary Centre, has asked government for a legal opinion. We did not get one but yet the Prime Minister, just a couple of days ago, made it quite clear in the House that he and the government recognize the legitimacy of the war. To say that the war is illegal and that is why the NDP is against it does not hold water.

However, we have concerns about where the government stands on this. In the beginning, before the war had actually started, as questions, comments and debates raged in this House, most parties—and I am not speaking for the NDP or the Bloc—were in agreement when they said that they would support action if sanctioned by the United Nations. That would have been the ideal way to go about this. However, because of procrastination within the United Nations, it did not happen.

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Let us look at what was going on in Iraq, and certainly everybody is aware of Saddam Hussein's past. We remember the Kurds he killed, the war with Iran, the invasion of Kuwait, and the slaughter of his own people. I could go on and on. For 12 years we have given him and his regime a chance to clean up their act, but they laughed at the efforts. Then we sent in a group to find the missiles or any kind of weapons of mass destruction. Did they find anything? To some degree, yes, but nothing of any great significance which would lead the other countries to decide to go in and take action.

We were not surprised that they did not find anything. As we watched the search it reminded me of the old days in Newfoundland outposts when the Mounties came in looking for the moonshine stills. They knew someone was coming, where they were, what they did and what they were going to do today and tomorrow. Were they going to leave the evidence out in the open for them to see? The answer is quite obvious.

All of this led to the point where somebody had to make a decision. It was the United States and Britain, and let us remember 40 other countries, who decided it was time to take action. A few days ago we had a vote on a motion put forth by the Bloc. The motion read:

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

Let us make a couple of things clear. First, the action was not initiated by the United States but by Saddam Hussein and his regime a long time ago. Second, the government voted for the motion. It voted to call upon the House not to participate, that means to not get involved at all.

Yet the following day, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was asked about Canada's stand. He said:

Mr. Speaker, it is not our view that the vote last night, which clearly was the opinion of the House, was that we should not be sending troops to be a part of this intervention. It would determine all future possibilities for all future time and no Parliament seeks to bind its government in such a way.

● (1525)

In other words, what the minister was saying was that if the motion came up and if the government thought the people of the country might support it at any one given time, it would support it also, but if it wanted to do something else tomorrow it would not make any difference. What kind of leadership are we seeing? For weeks in the House we saw a government jump all over the place and we could not get a clear-cut idea as to where it stood on the whole issue.

The Prime Minister sits on the fence with his finger in the air wondering which way the wind blows. He waits to see what the people of the country say. He is a leader governed by polls. He is one of those who says, there go my people, I must follow them because I am their leader.

We need a leader who leads the parade and not one who sits on the fence and watches it pass. We need people in government who realize that public opinion at any one time is not necessarily reaction to the actual situation. It is reaction to the initial reaction, and broadcasting of any one situation. That is exactly what we are seeing here.

There is a motion before us today. If the government had any influence with the United States or with the United Nations we may not have to worry about either this one or the one with which we dealt on Thursday because we would be looking at an entirely different scenario. There was a time when Canada led the fray in diplomacy. There was a time when Canada went to the United Nations and it was listened to. There was a time when Canada spoke to the United States or to Great Britain and it was listened to, and Canada offered a leadership role in democracy.

There was an interesting comment in the House this afternoon by the minister responsible for CIDA when talking about the government's involvement following the war. For days again the Prime Minister showed that the government had no idea at all of Canada's involvement following whatever happens in Iraq. Canada has always been a leader when it comes to refocusing and restructuring after world conflicts. Will we be a player this time? The government is now saying, after days and weeks, that Canada will be a player, but the comment today was probably the most applicable one. She said, "Canada will be there after the reconstruction". She did not say we would be there for the reconstruction.

I know she probably got mixed up in her wording but if we read the blues, she said that Canada will be there after the reconstruction and that is probably what will happen because we are so far behind as a world player these days.

It is extremely unfortunate. Our friend and neighbour to the south who would be there if we were in any kind of a conflict, but we sit by and pay absolutely no attention to them. We do not know where we are actually because there has been absolutely no leadership. The government is saying no that it is not getting involved one day and then the next says it does not know, maybe it will.

When people ask us to follow what government says and to support the government stand, how can we support a stand when we do not know what the stand is, when the government itself does not know what the stand is?

Canadians were always proud participants on the world stage. Canadians, and Newfoundlanders before they joined Canada, in both world conflicts lived the fray. Who went in and helped clean up Europe? Who went in and saved France from the German onslaught. Twice it was Canadians and Newfoundlanders. Let us not forget Vimy Ridge.

To look at how we are wimping out of our part as a player on the world stage, we only need to look at the song that Elvis Presley sang that was taken from the Shakespearean play:

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

That is exactly what we are seeing from the government.

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•(1530)

Canada should be a leader. All of us should be supporting a government and a country that plays a leadership role. In a conflict like this, we cannot sit back and let somebody else do it. We have to play our part and we should be involved.

I will go to parts two, three and four of the motion first. The second part expresses our support for the Canadian servicemen and servicewomen. Let us never fail to support our people who are involved in the conflict. Let us never fail to support the other nations who are there to protect the freedom of the world. If they had not been there in 1939 to 1945, what would it be like here? We would not have the freedom we have today to say whatever we want and to make the varying decisions that we make.

Part three states, “extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy”. Many people in Iraq are just as glad as others that this is happening because they might have the chance to find freedom and peace in their country and in the surrounding countries.

Part four states, “urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours”. That is the wish of all of us. Canada should play a leading role in the reconstruction, even if we did not have the forces. We all know how the government has let our defensive corps fall away to nothing, individually and in relation to the equipment that they must use. We at least could pledge our support and offer to help out as the reconstruction begins. We are not even listened to now. We are a joke on the world stage.

We talk about protest. It is not really hard to get a protest going. I also know there are people with varying views across the country, and I respect that right. However, I saw people in the Montreal Forum booing the American flag. That is unfortunate regardless of how we feel about the United States. Fortunately on Saturday night we saw a change when people in Toronto in the Air Canada Centre stood up and cheered when the American anthem was sung. Then we felt proud that we supported our neighbours. Whether we agree with the war, they are still our neighbours and we will be there to help them.

This is not the message that has been sent forth by the government. Backbenchers are making comments from which all of us distance ourselves. When frontline ministers start making similar comments, we wonder what is happening in our North American relationships.

It is about time that we as Canadians played our part in ensuring the world is a proper, peaceful place to live. We should be a leader in diplomacy. If we are not going to take that leadership role, then at least we should be able to support those who do.

•(1535)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I see one of my colleagues who would also like to ask a question. I will try to keep it short.

First, on behalf of the official opposition, I appreciate the approach of my colleague from the Progressive Conservatives to the motion we have tabled for debate today. I take it that at least he will

support it, and hopefully his party and all its members present will support the motion when it comes to a vote tomorrow afternoon.

I take no pride in the fact that it is even worse than what the hon. member talked about during his remarks. It is not only because of the Liberal government decimating our Canadian armed forces, that we cannot play a role even if the government chose to so. Even with things such as the expulsion of Iraqi diplomats, which the American government has called upon our country to do, our government refuses to take that type of action. It refuses to seize Iraqi assets in our country. It refuses even those little diplomatic steps that it could take to show its support for this war on a brutal dictator.

I noticed in the news today that Australia, a country similar to ours in size and population, is there actively involved with our allies and will be actively involved with the United States in the clean up of debris in a port so humanitarian aid can be brought into Iraq to help the Iraqi people. Canada is nowhere to be seen. On all those fronts, Canada could play a meaningful role if only the government would act on behalf of the forces of freedom.

Could my colleague comment on those types of roles that Canada could play?

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, I may have been remiss. I am not sure when I started if I mentioned I would be splitting my time with the member for South Shore. That is why I ended so early, which leaves me 5 minutes rather than 10 minutes for questions and answers.

In relation to the question from my hon. friend from the Alliance Party, I am sure the complete lack of leadership in the present government is no surprise to him, as it certainly is no surprise to me and it is becoming no surprise to the people of Canada.

We do not have to be warmongers. There is nobody who would love to see a peaceful solution to this present conflict more so than myself. However, to have peace in the world, there sometimes has to be war. If we did not have the great wars of 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945, we would not have the type of peace, protection and freedoms that we have in the world. There comes a time when dictators and people who prey on others have to be stopped.

However Canada, if it did not want to be directly involved in warmongering, it could have been heavily involved in the peaceful side of it, in diplomacy, in reconstruction and in preparation for reconstruction, as was mentioned.

I was in Australia just a short while ago and there were protests against the government. The conflict had not started but it was talking about getting involved. I think 90% of the population was extremely upset. That is not the case today. There is always this initial reaction. As I said in my speech, people react to the initial reactions that usually come from somebody who is against whatever issue. We always get those who are solidly against any decision at first and they colour opinion until people begin to stop, think and analyze it themselves and then make up their own minds. We can see the support changing in the United States, in Great Britain, in Australia, and I would say here in Canada, certainly from my own experience and from what we can see quite obviously on different television shows from the different arenas.

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Yes, the performance of government has been abysmal. How can it change? Maybe if public opinion changes, government changes with it. Really, it is supposed to be the other way around. However, if we look at the government we are dealing with, I think that answers the question.

● (1540)

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the previous speaker help this side understand why in the most recent poll taken of Canadians, I think 68% believe the government has exercised leadership. Could he help us to understand that? Or are 68% of Canadians wrong in coming to that conclusion?

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, again, the hon. member just verified for all of us how the government operates on polls. Because this whole situation is extremely new to the Canadian populace, we will see what happens as this transaction progresses.

However, if he wants to talk about polls and if the government is going to react to polls, I hope tomorrow when we vote on the gun registration bill that the hon. member will go along with the polls and support what most of the people in this country say, and that is, to not put any more money into gun registration.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: They do not want any more money going to the gun registry. That is what the polls say.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, there is still a fair amount of discussion going on in the House about polls and I guess there are a couple of things about polls. Certainly anyone in the political arena should pay attention to them. It would be inadvisable for them not to pay attention. That does not necessarily mean that they have to be completely guided by them or follow them but they have to be aware of them. They have to know what the public opinion is. The other group in the country that is interested in polls of course is dogs. I would say in this case that perhaps the members who are paying too much attention to polls are in good company.

Perhaps without exception, no member in the House wants to go to war. No one wants to be seen as a warmonger. No one wants to support sending our men and women, our sons and daughters, to a foreign land where some of them will die in a foreign conflict. We are all aware of the gravity of the situation.

I have read this motion closely, as I read the Bloc motion very closely. A few days ago we debated the Bloc motion. We stood in the House and voted. I congratulate the Bloc members for bringing their motion to the House. I did not support it but I certainly congratulate them for bringing it forward.

I condemn the government for not having a vote on this issue, an issue of this importance to the future of the country, to the future of our armed forces and to the future of our role in the United Nations, in NATO, and in the free trade agreement with the biggest trading partner this country has. Certainly it would be incumbent upon the government under difficult circumstances and in difficult times to ask Canadians and their representatives in the Parliament of Canada to stand and be counted on this very important issue. That has not occurred.

In the last conflict in which Canada participated, there were three debates in the House. None of them were trivial, none of them were easy and none of them were taken lightly but all of them were important.

Again I refer to the Bloc motion. I did not support the Bloc motion because I felt it boxed us into a corner as a Parliament. It said that not only at this time but at any other time we would not participate in this current conflict. The government made a mistake and it was shortsighted. I do not think the government really read the motion, the same way the government does not read most of the information, except its polls, that is laid before them.

Let us take a look at the Alliance motion presented by its foreign affairs critic. I would like to break it down because I want it to be very clear to members of the public who are watching today and to my own constituents who are watching today. I would like to be on the record that nobody wants to support sending our troops to war. At the same time, with government comes responsibility. With government hopefully comes intelligence and prudence. With government comes the added responsibility of looking at the information in front of it and making an intelligent decision on it.

Let us go through this motion because I have not heard any of the other members actually go through it. The first part of the motion reads:

That this House:

(1) endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security in the Middle East region;

● (1545)

It is pretty difficult not to support that part of the motion. We can endorse the decision of our major allies without saying Canada is going to participate. It does not say that. It also recognizes the fact that the government has been anti-American, to its peril. Backbenchers in the government, like the member for Mississauga Centre, have stood in the House and called the Americans names for which we would wash out our children's mouths with soap if it happened at the dinner table.

The minister responsible for natural resources, whose largest trading partner for the industry he represents happens to be the United States, which it is for all of our industries, decided that he had the liberty as a minister of the Crown to pick a fight with the United States of America, to denigrate and call the President of the United States names. He has the right. Any member of Parliament has the right to think whatever they want. They should have the good sense not to call our largest trading partner and foremost ally names of any sort. It is unbelievable and unconscionable.

I do believe that resolution 1441 before the UN allows the British, the Americans and their allies the right to go into Iraq. We may or may not support that. That is immaterial. What this says is that they have the right to go in. I believe they have. The government does not have any legal opinion on it and there has never been a vote in the House. We cannot get the government to say the same thing two days in a row. What is the government's opinion? Who knows? Tomorrow it will be different.

Let us look at the second point made in the motion:

express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women,—

Any time: I will stand in the House on any day and express my unequivocal support for our men and women in the service.

—and other personnel serving in an exchange program with the United States and for those service men and women performing escort duties for British and United States Ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that all will return safely to their homes;—

I would expect that there is not a member of Parliament in the House who can vote against that part of the motion. They may find something in some other place in the motion that they do not agree with, but I would hope that none of them can vote against that part.

The third point is:

extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy during the military action to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction period that will follow;—

I would hope everyone could support that.

I am actually surprised by the Alliance motion. Certainly in the past I have seen Alliance motions that were too strident and too difficult to support and that I was simply not comfortable with. This is not one of them. It was actually couched, I believe, with a fair amount of caution and I would say it was deliberately worded so that all members of Parliament could support it. It does not say that Canada should be at war in Iraq, but it does say that Canada has a role and a responsibility. We have traditional allies who are at war and if we are not going to support them we should have the common sense not to be critical of them. That is a pretty simple request.

The fourth point is:

urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Certainly most people could support this motion. Again, the motion is not a motion to put Canadian troops in the battlefield. This is a well balanced, well couched motion to support our men and women in the service and to support our traditional allies, and I would think most members of Parliament could support it.

• (1550)

There are millions of other things to say. I know I have five minutes of questions. I am certainly out of time and I recognize that, so I will take questions.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues in the Conservative Party. I listened and I was pleasantly surprised and not disappointed in any way with their stand and their support.

I could probably stand here and claim that I have more relatives in the United States than any member in the House. Some of those relatives come from the very hometown of George Bush. When they listen to one of those running for the leadership of the NDP say that George Bush, who grew up there as a boy, sits around and thinks about how he can kill Iraqi children, I am hurt and they are hurt. It is a terrible thing for Canadians to say this, both inside and outside of the House, and not have the stomach to say they are sorry. It will go down in history as a black day for Canada.

Finally, in my own constituency at this time of year implement dealers put on sales. We are very close to the U.S. border. For all the

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buyers and all the big sales, they got a phone call saying, “We are not coming this year”. So members opposite should not tell the members on this side of the House that this is not going to hurt our trade relationship.

• (1555)

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. I would say that as important as our trading relationship with the United States is, and it is extremely important, it is not the reason to go to war. But it certainly is a reason not to make anti-American statements. It is a reason to keep Liberal backbenchers and ministers of the Crown under control. It is a reason to be balanced in our comments about the war.

As for the government, I question who is writing the speaking points. Just because the Americans and the British go to war, we do not have to trail around behind them blindly. We can make our own decisions. Quite frankly, in World War I the Americans were not there until 1917. In World War II, they were not there until 1941.

There is a reason for calculated judgments to be made here. We do not, under any circumstances, have to be critical to the point of dereliction of our duty to the people of Canada. That is how critical the government has been and that is a mistake.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to read the motion that we are debating here today into the record because I think it is a very valuable motion, and if people take the time to see what we are trying to do, they will realize that it is something that we would have hoped to see as a form of leadership from the government. The motion reads:

That this House:

(1) endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security in the Middle East region;

(2) express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women, and other personnel serving in an exchange program with the United States and for those service men and women performing escort duties for British and United States Ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that all will return safely to their homes;

(3) extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy during the military action to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction period that will follow; and

(4) urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours.

As we can see, and as the member who just recently spoke said, that motion has been crafted very carefully to try to hit all the key points that we as a government and we as a country should be focusing on in trying to deal with the plight of the people in Iraq, who I think have suffered a huge amount especially if we look at the last 12 years of the regime of Saddam Hussein and the pain and torture he has inflicted on his own people.

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As I previously stated, I have always stood here with mixed feelings when we stop to talk about war. It is not a pleasant thing and I think that most members in the House have similar sentiments. Why is that? Because on these issues of war and peace especially, I believe it is only natural to be conflicted on where we stand. For some people it is easy to say "peace at all costs", a refrain disproven in Munich and a refrain, I believe, that has been disproven at the United Nations.

I have always been a firm believer that in order to disarm Saddam and free the people of Iraq we need to follow the UN process. I have stated this a number of times to my constituents and in the House. I have also said that we must follow the UN process to its logical conclusion, that being, hopefully, the disarmament of Iraq by the United Nations or through other means, although I will caution that I did not say here that, and I will quote, I support open-ended war in Iraq. Where does this leave my position on Iraq?

It has been ever evolving, especially as the twists and turns of the UN have played themselves out over the last few weeks. At first I was optimistic that the UN would do its job. My hopes were dashed by the intransigence of the French government. Then I hoped that the ultimatum put forward by the coalition would convince Saddam to accept exile, a life of luxury. He did not and war broke out, so I had to make a decision last week on whether or not I would support our allies. Indeed, I did vote to support our allied coalition.

Why did I support this? It came down to a moral choice for me, a choice between right and wrong. My family fled Uganda when Idi Amin began butchering the people of that country. The UN refused to stop it. Tanzania intervened without UN approval, just as the coalition has done today in Iraq. I asked myself how I could deny the people of Iraq the chance for freedom, the very same opportunity I was given, just because of a diplomatic disaster at the UN. I could not. As someone in a position to help others, I believe it is my duty to do what I can to help them and not ignore their pleas for freedom, such as the Liberals and the French have done.

Before I expand upon my own experience and my choice, let me back up and talk about the United Nations process, its successes and failures. After all, it was on this process that the hopes of the world were hinged.

Canadians passionately believe in the United Nations process. The UN has always been portrayed as the great international body where nations of all political stripes gather, debate and solve world crises. It does not matter if the nations are run by most terrible dictators who slaughter their civilians by hundreds of thousands or if the nations are democracies that win and lose elections on how fast they can deliver essential health care services.

●(1600)

Everyone is welcome at the UN. Everyone has an equal say. Well, everyone with the exception of France, the United Kingdom, China, the United States and Russia. Those countries, due to realities of winning World War II, were able to snag a great veto power for themselves, a power that allows one of those nations to stop all debate and prevent the solving of any problem that they may want.

In fact, as Canadians have looked to the United Nations as a beacon of hope, I would argue that it instead has become a blight on

humanity. I am not referring to the many excellent programs that the UN delivers in the way of humanitarian assistance. I know that even in my own community the Aga Khan Foundation is involved in many of them. Programs such as UNICEF, UNESCO and others are indeed very worthy and do offer a beacon of hope. Programs such as the rebuilding of Afghanistan and the possible role it will play in the reconstruction of Iraq are commendable. Nor do I deny the UN's positive role in negotiating international treaties.

What I am referring to when I say blight is that archaic institution called the Security Council. That relic born of a post-World War II scenario was cemented during the cold war as a talk shop capable of doing nothing. The Security Council has always been governed by the veto of cold war powers. The Soviet Union would veto when the west would bring forward ideas and the west would veto when the Russians wanted to do something constructive.

Of course a UN booster would point to the fact that there have been 1,400 resolutions passed by the Security Council; 1,400 resolutions that were obviously not vetoed. Fair enough, let us look at those resolutions. For example, in the Middle East we all know that Israel has been in defiance of numerous resolutions. We also know that the Palestinians have been in breach of others. Yet what does the international community do about it? Nothing. Why? It is because each of these groups have a veto wielding state behind them and the UN can only work when superpowers give their consent.

When this consent is not given, I would argue that the UN is impotent and has failed the citizens of the world. Three very recent cases I can think of are Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and of course Iraq. I will not go into much detail regarding Rwanda, but suffice it to say that I am sure we all remember the failure of the UN to prevent the genocide of millions of innocents.

Of course in Yugoslavia we all watched for years in the early 1990s as the UN peacekeepers failed to stop the daily massacres and constant civil war. We remember those Canadian peacekeepers taken hostage by Serbian forces and we remember the impotence of the UN to protect them. We watched Bosnia for years until finally the United States, not the UN, took the initiative and forced the combatants to make peace.

Again, only a couple of years later, when the crisis once again erupted in Yugoslavia, this time in Kosovo, we watched hopelessly as the Russians threatened to use their veto to block any attempt to end the genocide. Once again the United States acted. This time Canada was by its side in NATO. We declared war and we stopped the massacre. The UN failed once again.

Where does that leave Iraq? Interestingly, Iraq is a unique example in the history of the United Nations. It is a sad history when only three times it has authorized the use of force to prevent war and genocide. The first was the U.S.-initiated action on Korea. Resolution 82 passed on June 25, 1950, and several subsequent resolutions authorized the United States to make war on North Korea in order to liberate the south.

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The second time the UN has authorized action was in 1990 when on November 29 the Security Council, in resolution 678 said:

Authorizes Member States... to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660....

This of course laid the basis for the UN action that took place in the early months of 1991.

The third time was the one with which we are all familiar, resolution 1441. This is where it was stated that:

—Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions, including resolution 687....

It goes on to state:

—while acknowledging paragraph 1 above, to afford Iraq, by this resolution, a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations under relevant resolutions of the Council;

I know my time is running short but I want to make the case that clearly there have been violations and clearly Saddam has been persecuting his own people for years. There was a reason to act and there was a reason for us here in Canada to take a principled stand. I wish the government would have joined our coalition allies to be able to say that and liberate these people.

• (1605)

Since my time is up, I would like to offer an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended in the first paragraph by replacing the words "endorse the decision" with the words "recognize the legitimacy of the decision" and by inserting after the word "security" the words "including justice".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I find the amendment to be in order.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would tell the House about his personal experiences with living under the rule of a dictator and how Canada at that time assisted in liberating that country, if at all.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult thing to talk about at times because many of the stories that I was told with regard to what happened to our family in Uganda were pretty severe.

I was fortunate as I was only a toddler at the time, only nine months old, when we came to Canada as refugees. As I have said before, the reason I think I ended up in this place at such a young age was because of the value of democracy and freedom that my father always spoke to me about when I was growing up. At the time we left Uganda it was under pretty much life and death circumstances. We lost everything during that process. We were forced to leave. If we had not left we would have paid with our lives. From what I understand, that radical dictator, Idi Amin, killed about half a million of his own people.

There was enough justification to act at the time but the UN was not able to do so. Canada did its part, and I commend it for that. It played its part by accepting a large number of refugees. As a matter of fact I think it accepted one of the largest number of refugees at that time of any other country. I commend the government of the time for doing that.

However the only government that actually acted, which everyone basically endorsed it to go ahead, was the Tanzanian government

which moved in and ousted Idi Amin who went into exile in Saudi Arabia.

I am torn. As we have heard, no one wants to endorse war but clearly where there are violations of human rights, where potentially millions of people can be killed senselessly by dictators such as, in the case of my family, Idi Amin, why can this country and other countries not stand together and do what is right? I know in my heart I am torn but in this case I cannot give in to a radical dictator like Saddam Hussein, the same way I can never endorse what happened to my family. I believe I have a moral obligation because of my experiences to try to bring that sort of opportunity of freedom to others who are facing those same circumstances.

• (1610)

Mr. Alan Tonks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has expressed very well some of the sentiments that many members in the House feel in terms of a number of issues, one of which being the inability of the United Nations, because of some of the reasons to which the member alluded, to come to a diplomatic solution and bring the forces to bear that would have influenced the Iraqi government and thereby avoided the whole conflict.

The member suggested that perhaps it was the Security Council that was the problem. I would like the member to address further whether he feels that if there is an inability to deal with the Security Council and its structure, he sees some wisdom in changing the rules of membership in the Security Council such that a major player on the world stage, like Canada, would have an opportunity to influence diplomatically the course of events. Could different structural changes be made in the Security Council that would allow countries like Canada to play a major role as opposed to a minor role in terms of influencing events?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, I, as I think many members of the House, would be open to debating the future of the UN and look at how we could restructure it to some extent to work more equitably and actually not have cases such as we see today, where often one country can veto the direction of many others when it comes to maybe doing what is right.

I would like to see Canada have a stronger role at that table but we need to ask ourselves here in Canada whether we in fact are taken seriously internationally.

We have been doing some great things over the years when we look at our peacekeeping abilities and our influence at being seen as a neutral country but over the years this, unfortunately, has deteriorated. Why has this deteriorated? I would say that it is because the current government does not see the value of putting some of our military capability or some of the investments, which are required for us to be taken somewhat seriously internationally, at the forefront and evaluate what our role should be in international conflicts.

I have no doubt that people still respect our country and want Canada to bring its experiences to the forefront of many of these particular international crisis. We are such a pluralistic country, one that stands for a lot of values that other countries would like. How in fact could we strengthen our role here at home so we actually can be taken seriously?

Government Orders

I am all in favour of restructuring the UN but we need to take some concrete steps here at home to ensure that we as a country are strong and viewed that way internationally before we can even be taken seriously around the world.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague in the Canadian Alliance, the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla, for moving today's motion to support our allies in Iraq.

It was not my intention to rise in the House to speak to the motion as I had risen previously on this issue and wanted to give my hon. colleagues an opportunity to go on record regarding the issue. However I felt it was important to tell the House, but more important, to convey a message to our friends to the south that Canadians are outraged by the Liberal government's position of supporting Saddam Hussein rather than our traditional, democratic allies.

Here is an example of the letters I have been receiving regarding the Iraq policy of the government. The title is "The Cowardice Liberal Government". The letter was sent to the Prime Minister with copies to the White House and myself:

Mr. Prime Minister, I'm certainly not surprised that you have sided with the government of France rather than support the American government with its decision.

You have succeeded in bringing shame upon all Canadians.

I've forwarded an e-mail to the White House, as a Canadian, offering my support.

Why the...are you still the Prime Minister?

I want to thank Jim from Pembroke for saying what is on the minds of millions of Canadians today. Canadians are telling us that they do want their government to be neutral.

Last Friday, March 21, I had the honour and the privilege of hosting a town hall meeting at the Best Western hotel with the leader of the only opposition to oppose the government's stand on Iraq, the leader of the Canadian Alliance.

It was standing room only as the people of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke packed the place to hear a real leader speak. My office was flooded with calls for copies of my leader's speech from the previous evening here in the House, a speech that was a true testament to Canadian values.

I have no doubt that it was the inspiring words from the Canadian Alliance, the member for Calgary Southwest, that brought the people out that night.

The anti-American stance that has been adopted by the government is looked upon by the people of my riding with shame and disgust. It is with pride that I recognize Reeve Gordon White of the Whitewater region of my riding for making the following motion to Renfrew County council:

Reeve Gordon White moved, seconded by Reeve Jack Wilson of Laurentian Valley:

That the Warden, in conjunction with Renfrew County staff, send a letter directed to Mr. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, regarding—

• (1615)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order. The member has just mentioned the Prime Minister by name. I ask her to please do not do it again.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: —the article of Thursday, February 27, 2003, Federal MP on Americans: "I hate those bastards" as stated by Liberal MP on February 26, 2003, MP for Mississauga Centre re: This type of comment toward American neighbours is totally irresponsible, despicable and not acceptable in the fostering of ongoing public relations with our trading partners south of the border. A copy of the letter be sent to MP for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

It is my privilege to publicly acknowledge the following mayors and reeves of Renfrew County Council who endorsed this motion: Reeve Janice Bush, Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards; Reeve Bill Croshaw, Head, Clara and Maria; Reeve John Doering, Horton; Reeve Arlene Felhaber, Bonnechere Valley; Reeve Audrey Green, Renfrew; Mayor Russ Havelin, McNab Braeside; Reeve Norm Lentz, Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglin; Reeve John Frost, Greater Madawaska; Warden of Renfrew County and Mayor of Madawaska Valley, Bill Schweig; Mayor Bob Sweet, Petawawa; Reeve Harold Weckworth, North Algona Wilberforce; Reeve Gordon White, Whitewater Region; and Reeve Jack Wilson, Laurentian Valley.

While the official government line is that the member from Mississauga is a minority in her party, the message has gone through to rank and file Liberals to defend intemperate comments that if they were directed at a visible minority, for example, would have been called racist.

It is interesting to note that of the three councillors who voted against the motion condoning the anti-American remarks in the process, one is actually a declared candidate for a federal Liberal nomination and one of the others has a reputation for speaking before thinking, particularly when the issue involves a party which she calls common sense.

The Renfrew county councillors who voted for this motion are smart enough to understand the economic importance of American markets. The U.S. is, in the words of Reeve Gordon White, our lifeline when it comes to selling agricultural and lumber products as well as attracting tourists. Reeve Bush observed that the anti-American stance of the Liberal government only harms the struggle to reach a fair softwood lumber agreement that is so important to Canada.

Consumers are already feeling the slowdown at our borders. The government is only fooling itself if it thinks there would be no long term repercussions from its decision to ally Canada with the likes of Libya rather than our traditional allies like Great Britain and Australia.

Canadian veterans are concerned about Canada's lack of involvement. I was interested to read in the Pembroke *Daily Observer* a quote from Korean Veteran Harold Doner who was speaking at Branch 72 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Pembroke. He said, "We should have backed the States. We used to be reliable like England, but now,..."

America will remember who her friends are. With 93% of our trade with the United States and a Canadian military that has been gutted by the current government, I find it incredible that the federal government is taking a pro-Saddam Hussein position.

Government Orders

As the riding that is home to CFB Petawawa I am in contact with our troops. These soldiers, who regularly train with their US counterparts, feel shame at being labelled cowards. The Canadian military relies on US equipment with which to train. We rely on US planes to fly our troops to peace missions because we do not possess any strategic lift. How can we, with any sense of honesty, ask the Americans for anything again?

So much for the expression “middle power”. The government gave away our sovereignty both economically and militarily long ago. Very soon it will find that being a friend and an ally has its responsibilities.

In closing, I will quote from my leader's speech, for which he received a standing ovation in Pembroke last Friday night, words that stirred the heart.

• (1620)

For the first time in history, the Liberal government has left us outside our joint British and American allies in their time of need.

The Canadian Alliance supported the American and British position on this issue because we share their concerns. We share their worries about the future if Iraq is left unattended to and we share a fundamental vision of civilization and human values. Alliances are two-way processes and where we are in agreement we should not leave it to the United States to do all the heavy lifting just because it is the world's superpower. To do so would undermine the most important relationships we have and in an increasingly globalized and borderless world, such relationships become even more important in the future.

Since Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979, more than one million people have died as a consequence. They have died through killing and torture as individual opponents, real and imagined.

A country that does not honour its own friends and allies in a dangerous world but uses them and rejects them at will, such a country in time will endanger its own existence. This country was forged in large part by war, not because it was easy but because it was right. We did so for freedom, democracy and civilization itself, values that today continue to be embodied in our allies and in their leaders.

We will stand, and I believe most Canadians will quietly stand with us, for these higher values which shaped our past and which we will need in an uncertain future.

• (1625)

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a note about the concept of courageous compassion. We are not there shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers, but we hear the discussion that we are going to be there to put Iraq together afterward. But because we are not there now there is no guarantee that we are really going to be there later because we will not be running the show.

We have already seen the unloading of compassionate aid coming in once the port was secured. That operation of humanitarian aid and compassion is already underway, and we are not part of it.

Can the member talk a little about courageous compassion and what this is all about? It is for our security but certainly also for the humanitarian aspect of the people of Iraq.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, courageous compassion is demonstrated through the benefits of modern technology in that we are able to see exactly what is going on at the war front. While it is necessary to punch through the Iraqi forces, many of them not wanting to fight the Americans and their allies who are trying to liberate them, we see that some are injured, but as soon the forces catch up with those who are surrendering, immediately the compassion is showing through in the videos.

Sometimes they incur injury but immediately they are offered compassion and medical aid. Contrast that with the videos that the Iraqi government has put out with the captured U.S. troops and some of them civilians. They were shot down and their bodies were thrown into a pile for all the world to see.

It is against the rules of the Geneva convention, against anything humane—shooting and executing civilians and troops before a camera. Contrasting the compassion that we see through the video feed, it goes to follow that what this conflict is about is liberating those who have a leader who shows no compassion for his constituents, the women and children who are routinely beaten, tortured, starved and raped by their own leadership.

Millions of dollars are flowing in as a result of oil, but instead of helping his own people he uses it to build arms and to kill his own people.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. She mentioned a higher value. In case she does not know, the higher value is peace; peace at any cost.

Over the last few weeks and months it has been remarkable how Canadians stood fast with their own government in advocating that the only solution to the problems that we are having is through the United Nations. Many people have criticized the United Nations through the years. There is no doubt that it is not a perfect organization, but nevertheless it is the only thing we have as a collectivity in the world.

Many times we heard that democracy is not perfect, but there is nothing else that comes close to it that we would prefer. It is the same thing with the United Nations.

Through the years after the second world war, the failure of the League of Nations after the first world war gave birth to another attempt, the United Nations. We had great hope that this collectivity of the world powers would protect us against the abuses that we saw through the years.

The United Nations has had many difficulties in this Middle East effort. I could not help but note that the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla stated in the first part of his motion:

(1) endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security in the Middle East region;

Government Orders

All we would have to do is take out a few words and say, “endorse the decision of the allied international coalition of military forces to enforce resolutions 181, 242 and 380”, and continue. That would have contributed greatly to peace in the Middle East.

The United Nations was confronted with the situation whereby we had a rogue state like Iraq with a leader who nobody disputes is lacking in sanity. We all agree that his own people have suffered. We figured that the time had come and realized that the only solution was peace. It cannot be done any other way if we want to progress and truly become civilized in this world.

The United Nations has many drawbacks, but at least the attempt has been laudable. In this particular event with Iraq, which had been contained, it was going very well. I am sure that the French, Germans, Russians and Chinese had legitimate reasons to feel that they took the endorsement of the United Nations. The Canadian government stood behind that and the polls have shown that the majority of Canadians endorse that. We felt that the time had come that we had to go to the bitter end and find a solution peacefully.

Many years ago, a Canadian journalist wrote a book, in which he was advocating how Canada could be a real powerful agent in the world as a peacekeeper. The book was entitled *Peacemaker or Powder-Monkey; Canada's role in a revolutionary world*. Obviously we chose to be peacekeepers, and that has not been easy for us.

When this issue dawned on us in the Middle East, where there has been confusion ever since the second world war, we had to stand our ground. It is with great pride that Canadians saw their government take a stand. By far most of the colleagues in the House stood by the government and felt that this was the only solution. We are very happy with that.

• (1630)

[Translation]

For the past few weeks, there have been huge demonstrations, especially in Montreal. It was pleasing and almost surprising to see the number of Canadians who took to the streets to show that they truly value peace. It is difficult to maintain peace. It is not difficult to make people angry and afraid, but maintaining peace is something else.

During the demonstrations that we have seen across the country—and I followed those in Montreal very closely—it was wonderful to see the unity, and the hope that peace, not war, would prevail, because war leads to more violence and other reactions.

We could talk about this for hours in this House, but to sum up, it is important to note that Canadians were behind the government's position that the United Nations is the only organization that can order such drastic measures as declaring war.

We hope to see in this world, and celebrate in this House a day when the United Nations alone will have the power to decide what action to take in circumstances so serious as to require nations to join together in war. We are always going to work toward this goal. However, we must realize what is at stake, and it is very difficult to know what the truth is.

In conclusion, I was very happy to see Canadians from all provinces back the government in its desire to support the measures

for peace. It was one of the greatest things I have seen done by our community and I am very happy and proud—more than ever—to be Canadian and to be for peace.

• (1635)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Before proceeding to questions and comments, I would like the hon. member for Gatineau to confirm whether or not he will be sharing his time with the hon. member for York Centre, because we have an indication to that effect.

Mr. Mark Assad: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I forgot to indicate at the beginning of my speech that I was going to share my time with my hon. colleague from York Centre.

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me. Allow me to congratulate the hon. member for Gatineau on his speech.

I know very well how terribly complex the whole reconstruction phase is. Even while the conflict is going on, our government is working together with UN organizations to develop and implement strategies to make us as effective as possible.

I would like to give my hon. colleague the opportunity to explain what role Canada will play, given the important strategic position in which our Prime Minister has put himself throughout the period leading up to actual conflict. He is one of the heads of state with the most experience in this regard, and is in a position to have extremely productive discussions with both parties to the conflict. I would like to give my hon. colleague an opportunity to elaborate on the extremely important role of Canada during the reconstruction phase, which is already underway.

Mr. Mark Assad: Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate the fact that we are proud of the exemplary courage demonstrated by the Prime Minister. He felt supported by Canadians, by the colleagues in his party and even by members of the opposition.

As for the issue of reconstruction in Iraq, I am one of those who feels that Canada will play a role in it. In articles appeared in the United States last week, it was said that it would be private sector companies that would do this reconstruction. The role of other countries was not mentioned. We know that most of these private companies will come from the United States.

Who will pay for this reconstruction? We know very well how it will be funded, given the riches that exist in Iraq. I had hoped that the United Nations would say it was up to the UN to decide how to proceed and what means to use in the reconstruction of Iraq. We must help these poor people who have been victimized by a man who is out of control, there is no doubt about that. It is up to the United Nations to help the Iraqis, to give them a chance to live in peace and to give them hope. None of Iraq's riches were being used to support the most fundamental needs in life.

Government Orders

•(1640)

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to my colleague that I was in Montreal for these big demonstrations. I was so very happy to call myself a Montrealer. So many people marched for peace. It was beautiful to see. Taking part in it felt good. It gives us hope for the future.

I also wanted to tell my colleague that I fully agree with what he said with regard to the reconstruction. In fact, that was the subject of my question this afternoon.

Canada must pressure the United Nations. We are concerned, and for good reason, that the unity and sovereignty of Iraq could be threatened if it becomes a protectorate of anyone other than the United Nations. It is critical that the UN oversee the reconstruction.

Mr. Mark Assad: Mr. Speaker, I agree fully with the hon. member. If the UN and the world community do not do the reconstruction, there will be resistance and that will complicate things. The only approach is for the UN to oversee the reconstruction. This will provide hope for bolstering the United Nations so that it may play an enhanced role everywhere there is conflict. We must realize that this is the only instrument available to us. We must help the United Nations as much as possible, and ensure that they are an instrument of peace, regardless of the consequences.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): 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 Terrebonne—Blainville, Iraq.

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us from the Canadian Alliance is in four parts. The first part is the part which all of the discussion has been about today, where there is a difference of opinion, but I think there is a lot of support, maybe not unanimous support but a lot, for the other three parts. The second part of the motion talks about support for Canadian servicemen and servicewomen. Of course we support them. The third part talks about the innocent people of Iraq and suggests support and sympathy and the desire to be involved in reconstruction. The fourth part of the motion talks about humanitarian assistance, which I am again absolutely sure that every member of the House wants to see happen.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you if the House would perhaps give its consent to the four parts of the motion being voted on separately. If there is unanimous agreement, then let us have the opportunity to vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, that is very disappointing. There is a lot of support for parts of this motion, but if the Alliance were serious about getting that support, it would not be playing the kind of political games it is and which it now has denied that to happened.

The Alliance members like to say that they support the people and that they reflect what the people want. Yet on the weekend we saw in two polls. In one poll, 71% of Canadians support the position of the

government with respect to Iraq. In the other poll, two-thirds of Canadians support the government. That party clearly does not reflect what the majority of Canadians want. The majority have clearly indicated their support for the government in this matter.

I strongly support that. It is a principled position and it is an important one. The war is unnecessary, certainly unnecessary at this time and probably very unnecessary at all. War should always be a last resort and there was progress being made to find a peaceful solution. The United Nations was clearly on the track of disarmament. The chief weapons inspector, Mr. Blix, was doing his job and indicated that in fact progress was being made. He did not say the work was all done. He said that progress was being made and more time was required. I am sorry that more time was not given.

An hon. member: How much time would you like, another 10 or 12 years?

Hon. Art Eggleton: When talking about war, one has to be very careful. Look at the damage and terrible things that are happening in that war now. If we could have avoided it through further work on disarmament, and I believe we could have, then that is what we should have done. That is the principled position taken the government. That is the principled position which is supported by the people of Canada in majority.

Of course if one examines Mr. Bush's remarks, he has never been clearly on the path of disarmament. That was the United Nations' endeavour. He talked about regime change. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator. There is no doubt we want him to go. There is no doubt that the Iraqi people will be far better off without him.

If regime change is what this is all about, then it begs the question, who is next after Saddam Hussein? After all, there are a lot of brutal dictators still left in this world and a lot of people who violate human rights. I thought it was absolutely atrocious that the head of the country of Libya, who violates human rights, should become the head of the human rights commission. There are a lot of such people who exist in this world.

There is North Korea. I consider North Korea to be a more clear and present danger, as the words go, than Iraq. Iraq in this conflict has not shown a very strong ability to defend itself or to attack. It has not attacked any of its neighbours. One of the things that was feared was that it would probably launch scud missiles against Israel, but it has not done that. In fact it has lost a lot of the territory from which it could launch them. Obviously it is not quite the strong danger that some people have tried to make it out to be.

Government Orders

Who is next is one of the questions. Then the other question is, who decides? Quite obviously the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the U.K. have decided to go around the United Nations process. I know the United Nations is not a perfect institution. It does need reform but it is our only institution for international discussion, for keeping things within a multilateral process and, as such, is quite vital for us. I believe we have to continue in that process. Otherwise, might becomes right. In other words, the countries that are the strongest go off and do what they want to do. I do not think that is in the best interests of the people of this world at all.

Therefore, who is next and who decides are important questions. Those are things that I think are very much in question as a result of this action by these countries that are part of the coalition.

• (1645)

I want to point out, as we talk about our friendship and our trading relationship with the United States, that yes, the United States and the American people are very close friends of ours, they are allies of ours and that will continue. That will not stop. We are very committed to the campaign against terrorism. We have committed more troops to Afghanistan than many of these 35 or 40 countries have committed to the Iraq effort, which the United States lists as supporters. We have been there with them. We have lost troops. We have had casualties in Afghanistan.

We are working with our United States allies in terms of the defence of this continent, Norad being one of the best instruments of that, with the smart border programs and all the things we are working on together to help ensure the safety of the people who live on this North American continent.

They will continue to be our friends and allies. I know that some of them are not very happy with our position on this but friends do disagree. We disagreed before. We did not go Vietnam. We disagreed with them on that, we disagreed with them on Cuba and we disagree with them on this one. On many other occasions though we have stood shoulder to shoulder, as we continue to do in the campaign against terrorism and in particular the effort in Afghanistan.

Some people talk about the trading relationship. The trading relationship is driven by the business communities in our two countries. I can tell members that they will want to keep it going. Regarding United States businesses, we are their biggest customer, far bigger than any other country in the world. They will continue to want to export their goods and services into our country. They will not want to stop that.

In terms of what Canada exports there, bear in mind that we are the number one foreign country in terms of the provision of energy to the United States of America, whether it is oil, natural gas or electricity. That trading partnership will continue. Yes, there are always problems with softwood lumber or this or that, but they all predate this kind of decision about Iraq in any event. I think we will get through all of this and still be great friends and great allies.

We hope and pray that the war will be quick and that the amount of suffering and casualties will be kept to a minimum. So far that looks to be the case. It is going rather quickly but we do not know, of

course, until they get to Baghdad just how much opposition might occur.

After the war is over, winning the peace may prove to be more difficult than winning the war. There will be a long period of time to try to establish a civil society in Iraq and to try to establish some form of democracy in a country that really has not had it and to try to deal with the ethnic divisions within that country. Initially it would appear that there will be a military governor from the United States and that will create a lot of controversy in that entire region. Let us hope that this conflict can be over quickly and that it can be contained so it does not spread to other parts of the region or become a conflict of civilizations.

I believe in the position we have taken and therefore I cannot support the first part of the Alliance motion. I wish we had an opportunity to support the other parts but we have been denied that.

• (1650)

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, one thing I heard the hon. member say in his speech was that he felt that things were on track in Iraq, that everything was going okay and that had we maintained the status quo, things would have started to come together.

However I would point out to him first that this has been going on for 12 years. He said that the war was so devastating on the people. In actual fact the allied forces, the coalition, have been acting very responsibly, keeping any civilian casualties to an absolute minimum and backing off when it appears that there is a potential that Saddam Hussein's forces is using civilians as human shields. They are acting extremely responsibly.

The member said that things were on track and we needed to give him a little more time. First, I would point out to him that many people claim the sanctions, which have been in place for 12 years, are as bad if not worse than the war itself. Second, the containment necessary to keep Saddam Hussein in check, which I would think he would accept as necessary under this status quo, is costing upwards of \$1 billion a day, something to which Canada is not even contributing.

As far as the inspectors being on track, there are 100 inspectors. In my riding, a big rural riding, we have 100 RCMP officers. We are famous for marijuana growth in the Slokan Valley. Those 100 RCMP officers are having trouble finding those grow ops. Iraq is half the size of British Columbia. What does he expect the 100 inspectors to accomplish in a country that size and how long should people have to suffer under—

• (1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I am sorry to interrupt. The hon. member for York Centre.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it has been an issue as to the number of inspectors. I think that most countries at the United Nations said that if Mr. Blix wanted more he could get more. He said, no, that he felt he had the number of people he needed. He just needed more time to carry it out but he believed that disarmament could be achieved.

Government Orders

The member asks, what about the last dozen years. Yes, it is quite true that Saddam Hussein got away with an awful lot for an awful long period of time. There I think we give credit to President Bush for putting up the pressure, for creating the kind of circumstances that the inspectors could operate in and actually achieve things. However, then at the end, instead of giving the inspectors the full time they needed to do the job, and I believe they could have done the job, he went over the top and pulled out of the United Nations process and attacked. I believe that was the wrong decision.

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the member and the former minister on a very comprehensive speech.

He said that winning the peace may be more difficult than winning the war. My question for him is on that basis.

The *New York Times* reported in its edition yesterday that only American contractors would be allowed to bid on the restoration of Iraq. Could the member for York Centre comment on that?

Hon. Art Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this war is costing the United States treasury an awful lot of money. I suppose it will try to find means to recover it. I would not be surprised if we found familiar names of oil companies working in Iraq before long, names of companies based in the United States.

However I think we have a big risk though beyond the war and that is in the time of occupation with an American being a military governor, a la MacArthur at the end of the second world war in Japan. That is a very risky business. I think it will create a lot of animosity with the Arab and Muslim world. It will not be the end of this challenge and this problem that is faced.

I hope that does not prove to be the case but war frequently does not go the way we expect it to. Winning the peace can be also a very difficult matter.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among parties in the House and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion: that the motion relating to government orders, ways and means proceedings, No. 6. be deemed to have been put and a division thereon demanded and deferred until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25.

The reason for this motion is to permit hon. members to see the budget bill one day earlier than they would without this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Does the hon. government House leader have unanimous consent to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton North.

In my 10 minutes I will read the amended version of the motion we are debating today just to remind people what we are talking about. Then I want to do a reality check for members of the governing party in particular, but also for some members of the opposition parties down the way. I will present six short points as a reality check. That is important. Then I will talk about support for our military, which is one of the key areas in our motion. The amended motion reads:

That this House:

(1) recognize the legitimacy of the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security including justice in the Middle East region;

(2) express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women, and other personnel serving in an exchange program with the United States and for those service men and women performing escort duties for British and United States Ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that all will return safely to their homes;

(3) extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy during the military action to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction period that will follow; and

(4) urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and with its neighbours.

It is the second point that most of my presentation will deal with. I first want to present six points as a reality check to members of the House. I have heard a lot of things stated again today that I think are not in touch with reality.

First, existing UN Security Council resolutions already provide for the use of force to disarm Iraq and to restore peace and security in the area. The gulf war did not end in an armistice; it ended in a ceasefire. We talked about the Security Council resolutions that spelled out the terms of the ceasefire. Saddam Hussein clearly has not met the conditions of that ceasefire, of that there is no doubt. Therefore action to be taken is clearly within international law.

The second point of clarification as a reality check is since Saddam Hussein came to power, more than one million people have died as a result of his heinous rule as a dictator.

Third, to the extent that Saddam Hussein has complied with the UN, it is only ever happened under threat of force. There are three occasions. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1991, it was only through the use of U.S. and other forces, including Canadian forces, that Saddam Hussein was pushed out of Kuwait to end that invasion. By 1995, a short four years later, Saddam Hussein was amassing troops to invade Kuwait yet again. It was only the amassing of troops on the border of Iraq once again that stopped him from invading Kuwait such a short time after the armistice agreement. Also, the only reason that weapons inspectors went back into Iraq was because of the amassing of troops on the border once again.

Saddam Hussein understands one language and that is the language of a very real threat of force. That is what led to this war and let there be no doubt about that.

The fourth point is that the disarmament of Iraq is necessary for the long term security of our world. It is necessary for the collective interests of our key historic allies and therefore, inherently in the national interests of Canada itself. We should remember that. The government in fact has betrayed Canadians and their historic allies on this issue.

● (1700)

The fifth point is the Liberals have left Canada standing for nothing, no principle, no alternative, no vision. The Liberals have left Canada standing with no one. We are standing on the outside watching our allies deal with this situation which is a true and very real threat to our nation.

Supply

The sixth point is a reality check. The Canadian Alliance has taken a position on this issue and we are not with Saddam Hussein. We will not remain neutral as the government has done on this issue. We will stand with our allies and our friends as we have always done. The government should take note of that and it should be there with our allies as well. It is absolutely disgusting that it is not. It is absolutely disgusting that the government is simply unwilling to commit our nation to taking action against this heinous dictator who has killed over 1.2 million people. That is a reality check.

I want to speak about the second part of our motion which deals with the unequivocal support of the Canadian men and women serving in this war. Interestingly enough, we know the government has said time and again until very recently that no Canadian troops will have anything to do with dealing with Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

It is interesting to note that over the last few days we have seen the government creeping toward saying that there are a few men and women on exchange programs with the United States and the United Kingdom and they will fight. Over the last day or two the defence minister has said that we are helping out with the situation in Iraq through our three naval vessels that are leading a battle group of allies in the area. They are providing escorts to ships going to and coming from that area and are doing interdiction to try to pick out ships that may be carrying weapons of mass destruction and so on.

It is interesting that we have seen the government not officially change its position, but certainly creep toward saying it took the position against involvement in Iraq to a position where it is doing something at least. It is absolutely embarrassing to have that contradiction.

The Prime Minister has said that this cause in Iraq is not a cause in which Canadian lives should be put at risk, yet Canadian lives are at risk. I agree that our people on the exchange program should stay there. I also agree that our frigates and our battleships should be involved in escorting allies in and out.

Why did the government not come clean up front and say that we are involved? Why have we not made a much larger contribution to dethroning Saddam Hussein and removing his regime and his weapons of mass destruction? Those are questions the government has to answer for Canadians.

I stand here today with pride saying that our men and women are as good as any in the world and that they are involved at least to some extent. They know we should be involved more, but at least they are involved to some extent in dealing with the situation in Iraq. I stand behind them absolutely on that. Unfortunately, the government does not.

The government has shown words of support for our serving men and women, but the kind of support our military personnel needs more than anything else is to be provided with the resources they need to do their jobs as well as they possibly can. That means we need more people in our forces. The government has cut the forces back from 80,000 to under 60,000. We need to restore it to the 80,000 when the Liberals came to power.

We have to re-equip our men and women so they are working with acceptable equipment in doing their job in important missions like the mission in Iraq they will be involved in in the summer and like

the mission that is going on now in Iraq. They have to have proper equipment, yet they do not. There is one example with which I can better explain just how bad the situation has become.

The Canadian Forces are operating with 40-year-old Sea Kings without proper night vision equipment. If the new helicopters were on board, the helicopter contract which the government cancelled, the effectiveness of our frigates that are worth about \$1 billion apiece would be multiplied several fold. Because inadequate helicopters are on board, they can only perform a small fraction of the missions they would otherwise be able to perform when it comes to the exact work they are doing in the gulf, the escort work and especially the interdiction work.

● (1705)

The government should be ashamed. The fact is that these helicopters are not capable. They are no longer safe. A report was done by a captain who was hired to do exactly that, to point out the shortfalls in the Sea King and their equipment. When I raised this matter with the minister in the House he tried to deny it. He tried to say that the chief of defence staff somehow overrides all of these reports, even if they are done by military experts such as Captain Eric Hill. He should be ashamed of that. If we want to show support for Canadian military personnel we give them the resources they need and stop supporting them only with hollow words.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been further consultations and I think you would now find that the motion is more acceptable. I move:

That the motion relating to government orders, ways and means proceedings, No. 6 be deemed to have been put and a division thereon demanded and deferred until 3 p. m. on Tuesday, March 25, 2003.

This is pursuant to an all party agreement at the House leaders meeting.

● (1710)

The Deputy Speaker: Does the minister of state have the consent of the House to present the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the sake of the reality check, as the member was mentioning, I have a question I would like him to answer.

I read somewhere not too long ago that once Iraq is invaded, it will help democratize the region. I have some fear about this for the following reason.

Let us look at the southern doorstep of the United States for over the last 50 years. The Dominican Republic had a dictator. There was a dictator in Haiti, Papa Doc. There was a dictatorship in Guatemala. There was a dictatorship in El Salvador. There was a dictatorship in Nicaragua. All those places had dictatorships that surrounded the southern doorstep of the United States.

If it was not possible to bring democracy there, how are we going to bring democracy to such a turbulent area that surrounds Iraq?

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate receiving that very good question from the member.

I do not know if the member is presenting that question as a way to justify his government's position of complete inaction in Iraq. Perhaps he is.

I would remind the member that his government decided to become involved in Kosovo, without a UN resolution by the way, which is what it is using to justify inaction in the case of Iraq. The government agreed to do that, to throw out the dictator, Milosevic, and to try to allow a democracy to be established. The same thing was done in Afghanistan with the support of the government.

I would like to know why the member supports his government's position in those two countries and does not support that same position in Iraq. It seems to be totally inconsistent.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have to agree in many ways with what the member had to say in his speech.

One of the big concerns I have had and the member touched on it briefly is with regard to the Sea King helicopters. I do not know if it is true but perhaps the hon. member could shed some light on this. I have read that it takes between 20 and 30 hours of maintenance just for one hour of flying time with the Sea King. I would appreciate it if the hon. member would enlighten me on whether that is the case.

On the same topic of the Sea King, not that long ago there was an article in the paper about one of them crashing onto one of our destroyers and pretty well embarrassing our armed forces by having to send the destroyer home. Perhaps he could confirm that too.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. In fact, the number is probably 40 hours of maintenance for each hour the helicopter flies.

I want to read a quote from this report that was released only less than a month ago. It was done by Captain Eric Hill, a naval captain out of Halifax. His mandate was to point out the shortfalls in the Sea Kings and the equipment. It was signed off on by the commander of the base he operated within. A couple of things he said relate to the questions that were asked.

He said, in fact, that out of 37 operational missions that the Sea King has operated in since the cold war, 33 have been above water operations. That is the interdiction type of operation involved in the gulf. I will read a part of his next point that relates to that. I will

Supply

quote from Captain Hill's report on information given by crews that fly the Sea Kings:

The inherent danger of approaching unidentified surface vessels creates the prerequisite for conducting SSC: a sensor capable of imaging beyond the limits of the human eye. [Sea King] crews do not have the tool to execute this mission. This has resulted in ineffectiveness and mission failure, endangerment of operational crews, the loss of life, and increasingly, exclusion from participation in joint/coalition operations in theatre.

That is exactly the kind of mission he is asking our people to be involved in and in fact which they are involved in the gulf region right now. This captain's report says clearly that the Sea Kings simply are not capable of performing a mission like that in any kind of effective way or in a safe fashion. It is shameful that our men and women are put in this kind of danger and that our billion dollar frigates are reduced in value to a fraction in terms of their effectiveness because of the lack of a proper helicopter on board.

• (1715)

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as I rise in the debate today I look around and think about how many people were here on January 16, 1991, when we saw gulf war one.

You and I were here, Mr. Speaker, and three more were of these members were here in 1991. Everyone else in the House is experiencing their first gulf war. I got out my speaking notes from that night and I think I was the one who was up on debate exactly when CNN declared that the war had begun. That was a traumatic experience for all of us. I said back then, over 12 years ago:

Those of us who have been following the news hour by hour in these last several days, have seen Saddam Hussein and his entire Iraqi Parliament standing up and chanting: "With our blood and with our souls, we will die for this cause and go to death for Saddam".

I wonder how many of them have in the ensuing years, and maybe not by choice. I think about that kind of attitude where they would stand up and be so blinded as to say that this was a noble thing for them to do. Here we are 12 years later and I really wonder what we have learned or how far we have come.

On that same day, Mr. Speaker, your leader at the time, John Turner, said that we were global citizens and had crossed that boundary and were involved. You were part of that caucus, Mr. Speaker. I am sure you remember him saying that. It was a traumatic night for all of us.

He said that we were global citizens and had crossed that boundary and were involved. Those are true words now. I see a member across the way who is a member of the government now and was a Tory at the time. I am sure he remembers that day as well.

Sometimes we do not get any options about whether or not we would like to be involved; sometimes we get dealt a hand. But in fact we might not want to go war. I do not think any one of us in the House is keen to go to war. Nobody could be accused of being a warmonger. Let us get that inflammatory language right out of this debate.

Supply

When I think about what has changed in those 12 years, I wonder. I have seen a regime change here, if I may use those words. Instead of the Conservatives in power, as they were in 1991, now the Liberals are and suddenly they need a UN Security Council recommendation and resolution. But when they were in power in the late 1990s, we saw that they did not really need a UN Security Council resolution to go into Kosovo. I wonder about the consistency and I wonder about the matter of principle and the matter of disarming Saddam Hussein.

When it was important in 1991 and there were resolutions brought forward for disarming, to have a ceasefire, not an armistice, as was mentioned earlier, we somehow think 12 years later that it was okay, but the government continues to say that it needs time. Now, in gulf war two, I think about what has lapsed in those 12 years, about how many innocent people have died. The question being asked on the government benches and by many people, which is a fair enough question to a point about "we need more time", is this: How much time is enough? Of course the answer to that is that there is never enough. It would never be enough for people to think that some good nature of Saddam Hussein's is suddenly going to take over and that he is going to think it is cool to live up to the resolutions.

If we watch human nature and look at the patterns of people and how they develop, we can see that if someone is not going to change their behaviour in a dozen years, my answer would be to everyone here, and I surely think they would agree with me, that there is never enough time for that. He simply is not going to change. In these last few days we have seen weapons being fired that were definitely on the list of equipment he was not supposed to have. So again, if we prove someone inconsistent in one area, then guess what, it is quite likely we will prove him inconsistent again.

• (1720)

It was fine for the member from York to stand up and talk about how we need more time, how we need to be really careful about being nasty to Saddam, and that as for the weapons he is basically a good guy and the weapons are okay. That is ridiculous. What is going to happen when something else comes trotting out? It is going to look foolish to say we did not really know that he was lying to us or we did not really know that he was being inconsistent. Good heavens, we have enough proof right now six ways to Sunday to know that this man is evil, inconsistent and dishonest and has people in his country thinking that he is going to be kind to them as their leader when thousands upon thousands of people have died at his own hands or by his own orders.

I see the government across the way being inconsistent, especially in regard to the Kosovo deal when it did not need a UN Security Council resolution then, which was important, as it ran under NATO. This week it is showing its inconsistencies by saying we really need it. If the Liberals were to look at their former leader, John Turner, they would see that he at least had the nerve to stand up and say, "I did not like it and I was not keen on it, but I think I should read it a third time". It was not because it was John Turner. He would be the first to admit he is not the most wonderful or brightest fellow on the planet, but he was a member and the leader of the Liberal Party that sat in opposition and is now the government. I wish the Liberals would take the time to let this sink in. We are global citizens and we

have now crossed that boundary and are involved, so we do not have a lot of options.

We talk about humanitarian aid. They are waxing on about when the war is over: We were not there with our allies, but boy, we will be there to do mop up and hope we get all kinds of contracts. In fact, on humanitarian aid there are now several working groups starting to put these things together, because we know there will be cleanup and rebuilding of all kinds. There are 14 groups working in the United States right now. What part is Canada playing? Precious little. Canada is not in the running. It has been basically non-existent. The minister for CIDA stood up in question period today and said yes, CIDA would be there, but there are no dollar figures and nothing is committed to.

If there is anything we know how to do well in this country it is oil exploration and oil recapping. Someone from my province of Alberta was being interviewed the other day and said that we are experts at this. He was involved in the Kuwaiti cleanup when all the oil wells were burning in Kuwait. He said on national TV that we are not going to have a chance of getting in there, first, to help, but second, for any sort of economic benefit in terms of cleaning up. He asked why we would when we were not there to stand with them in their time of need. Why would we expect anyone to be kind and loving to us so that we could say, "Good luck on your war and thanks a lot for our contracts. We will be there to pick up the economic benefit". That is just ludicrous.

There are many expatriates in Canada who are in exile and would love to go home, to their homeland of Iraq, and start rebuilding. I think that is going to be excellent. I think that will be a positive thing.

Twelve years ago we talked about Saddam Hussein. Here we are talking about him again, yet somehow the government hopes and prays that someone else will look after it. It is like someone standing up and saying, "Here I am. Send someone else". That is not courageous. That is not responsible in the global community. We are global citizens and for the first time ever we have said no to the United Kingdom. Great Britain is our mother of parliaments; we all keep talking about how we are fashioned after Great Britain. It is the first time that the United States and Great Britain have been unified in a mission and Canada is not there as a part of it. I just cannot believe how we would be, first, ignorant enough, but second, arrogant enough to think that we could kind of sit out the war and then move on in for economic benefits. It is bizarre.

I would ask members to rethink their stand, to say that it is important globally to stand with our allies and say how important that is, and not just say that we are going to side with Jacques Chirac. That is not right, because they are showing an inconsistency.

Supply

● (1725)

Jacques Chirac is standing and saying that he is the veto man. I do not want to be aligned with the veto man. I want to be aligned with getting Saddam Hussein out of office. You and I, Mr. Speaker, sat here in January 1991, and I am sure you would admit that it was a very difficult time for both of us and we do not want to see a repeat of that. Therefore let us make sure that when people ask the question of how much time is enough, we say that it is never enough. We are there now. Let us get involved and get the job done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine.

Ironically, only a few days after the adoption in this House, with a very strong majority, of a motion calling upon Canada not to go to war—a motion we accepted immediately—today we are debating a totally opposite motion. This one suggests that we change sides, undo the decision reached in the House with a strong majority, and say, “No, there was no such majority; no, there was no such motion”. It is quite ironic, then, that only a few days later we would have to do otherwise. That is what would happen today if we accepted the Canadian Alliance motion calling upon us to join the U.S.-U.K. coalition.

This morning, I heard the member presenting the motion say that it was disgraceful that, for the first time, we were not alongside the United States, our greatest ally, that we were letting Great Britain and the United States go it alone, that Canada was not with them.

However, I then asked him the following question which he did not answer, “Why, in 1939, was it perfectly legitimate for the United States not to join the coalition consisting of England, France, Canada and other countries, which had declared war in September?” The United States stayed out of it for very legitimate reasons. It is a sovereign nation which must make up its own mind. It was perfectly legitimate for the United States to decide, for its own reasons, not to go to war. Two years later, the United States declared war, after Pearl Harbor.

At the time, Canada's friendship with the United States did not suffer. Our friendship continued as before. We continued to trade with one another. We did not lose respect for the United States because it did not declare war at the same time we did. Why would it be any different today?

In fact, I support our noble and consistent reasons for not taking part in the war right now. First, because war is a last resort. Second, because war should be declared only if there is an immediate danger of being attacked by others. The danger was certainly not immediate. Third, we decided from the beginning that we needed UN approval.

It is easy, today, for the United States to say that resolution 1441 and the preceding resolutions on Iraq were sufficient reason to declare war.

● (1730)

[*English*]

If that were the case, that 1441 and previous resolutions on Iraq were enough to give them the right to declare war, why then did the United States and Great Britain decide to present another resolution beyond 1441? If they presented a second resolution after 1441, surely they themselves were not satisfied that 1441 was enough. If 1441 and previous resolutions had been enough, why then present another resolution? Once they presented another resolution, surely they had to accept the decision on that resolution.

The second resolution, according to the United States and Great Britain, meant that if the majority agreed with them, then the second resolution was fine and they would go to war with the UN approval. However, if the majority went against them, then the second resolution would not count and they would go to war anyway.

It is very convenient to say that it was France's veto that decided the whole issue, but the numbers were not there in the first place. Only four countries backed the U.S.-British resolution: the United States, Great Britain, Spain and Bulgaria. Let us leave France, China, Germany and the big powers alone. The fact is that smaller countries, such as Mexico, Chile, Guinea and Cameroon, underwent tremendous pressure from the United States, pressures almost to the point where people were saying that it was a coalition of bullying and of billing. In spite of that, they resisted. They never agreed to join the United States and Great Britain in the second resolution.

I also heard this morning, in the course of the debate, when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was making his speech, people from the Canadian Alliance making interjections time and again saying to him that he must be with Saddam. If people oppose the war they are with Saddam. I find that assessment simplistic, naive and insulting to the millions and millions of people all over the world who day in and day out, every weekend and every day, go out on the streets to protest.

I have been in three peace marches myself. Am I for Saddam? Are the hundreds of thousands of people who marched with me in Montreal, 200,000 last week, 200,000 this week, for Saddam? I hate dictatorships. I hate brutality. At the same time, surely we can think for ourselves and decide that being against the war does not mean being for the dictatorship.

Supply

What is amusing is that in the United States, major cities in 30 of the 50 states have passed resolutions denouncing the war: in California, 29 cities, including Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco and others; Colorado; Connecticut; New Haven; New London; Atlanta; Illinois; Chicago; Des Moines, Iowa; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston; Detroit, Michigan; Jersey City, New Jersey; New Mexico and in New York itself, the very heart and soul of the 9/11 process and the 9/11 horror. New York City went against the war. Is it for Saddam? Syracuse went against the war. Is it for Saddam? Cleveland and Dayton in Ohio, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, and Austin in Texas, the very state of George Bush, went against the war. Are they for Saddam? Cities in Virginia, Washington, D.C., Wisconsin, et cetera, went against the war. Are they for Saddam?

I find it insulting that people who stand and say that they are against brutal dictatorships are not consistent. If they are against brutal dictatorships, what do they do after Saddam is finished? Do they go to war against Iran? Do they go to war against Libya? Do they go to war against Zimbabwe and Mugabe? Do they go to war against Myanmar, which has ignored the dictates of the world powers for 10 years and has brutally imprisoned the duly elected leader of the opposition? Why do we leave them alone.

● (1735)

Why do we leave North Korea alone? North Korea is thumbing its nose at the United States and the world. It has tools of mass destruction far worse than an enfeebled Iraq has today. However we are scared of North Korea. We do not go to war there because the shadow of China looms very large. We use negotiation and diplomatic manoeuvres with North Korea but we go to war against Iraq because we know we are going to win easier there.

I am against dictatorship as are all of us here. I am against Saddam Hussein. At the same time, my reason, my heart and my soul tell me that war is abominable and a last ultimate resort. We were disarming Saddam, thanks to the United States and Great Britain and we all agree on that. Thanks to those pressures and to the inspectors doing their work, Iraq was dismantling rockets. We could have sent in more inspectors. We could have done more over flights of the Iraqi territory. In time the people of Iraq would have ousted Saddam Hussein as they have ousted dictators all over the world. Mobutu was a dictator who was ousted. Idi Amin was a dictator who was ousted. How many dictators have been ousted without wars?

What we are trying to do in Iraq is impose our democracy on a people. What will ensue are consequences we cannot even imagine. The Muslim world will be polarized against our world in the name of Islam. What will happen to Iraq? Will the United States be able to sort out the Shiites, the Sunni Muslims and the Kurds by magic because President Bush has decided it?

Asking those questions is to say that we who have decided against the war have a fair case, that war was unjustified and that we must resolve more than ever to join in multilateral actions with other people of the world to decide. The United Nations may be imperfect but it is the only multilateral forum that we have for possible conciliation and peace.

I know it is futile to speak about conciliation and peace at this time when the United States and Britain, with their four star generals with all their bars, are praising the great allies that are moving forward to

destroy Baghdad. When I see all these terrible bombs blowing up so many buildings I think of the many civilians who are within those buildings, women and children.

I speak against the war. I speak for peace. I hope that in the future we will resolve to work with other friends in the world rather than declare unilateral war.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):

Mr. Speaker, I have considerable respect for this member, although I am afraid I disagree strongly with him in some facts. In particular, I would draw his attention to some factual problems in his speech.

First, he suggested that somehow our western allies were being inconsistent by not seeking a military solution to the problem of North Korea's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Does the member not understand that North Korea is precisely an object lesson in the need to prevent rogue states and dangerous dictators from obtaining these weapons in the first place because once obtained they can hold us hostage and we cannot then respond?

The member suggested that dictators can be removed without the use of war. He cited two examples speciously: Idi Amin who was in fact removed from power, not peacefully by his people, but by a military intervention of the state of Tanzania without UN sanction. Mobutu was removed by a civil war, not by normal, peaceful, democratic means.

Perhaps he could point us to the case of one dictator of that nature who has been removed without resorting to the use of force.

Finally, the member said that Baghdad was being destroyed. Perhaps he could at least give some credit to our allies that are using greater discretion and care in the application of military force to avoid civilian casualties than likely at any other point in the history of warfare. The Iraqis themselves, that propagandistic fascist regime, claims that there have only been 3 civilian deaths in Baghdad and some 250 civilian casualties when there has been a tonnage of bombs dropped there with precision on government installations greater than all of those dropped in Dresden during the second world war which resulted in 150,000 deaths.

Therefore would the member please consider the facts rather than engage in hyperbolic rhetoric which I do not think serves the debate very well?

● (1740)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, that is really ironic because perhaps the member should find out where Saddam Hussein got his materials of mass destruction in the first place. Perhaps he should watch the footage of Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein. Perhaps he should also remember that Iraq was armed by the United States and others, including other western powers, because at the time we feared that Iran might win the war.

The hon. member should not come and tell us that we are so pious now, that we do not do anything wrong, and that we are on the right side of the equation. Many of these armaments come from old factories, whether they be American, French or British, which at the time we found convenient to supply these materials to Iraq because we wanted it to win the war against Iran.

We also want to prevent what is happening in North Korea. Yet it is completely inconsistent to say that we go to war because there are potentially weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, but in North Korea we use diplomacy.

Time and again when questioned, President Bush and others have said they will negotiate with North Korea. The reason we negotiate with North Korea is because we know that a war against North Korea would be far riskier than a war against Iraq because the formidable shadow of China looms large and China would never permit a war in North Korea.

So we leave it alone. We negotiate there, but we do not negotiate against Iraq, in spite of the fact that the inspectors pleaded for more time. They said that a few more months and they will disarm Iraq. This war was written in stone months ago because President Bush had decided to go to war regardless. The United Nations became a convenience. When the second resolution did not pass because he could not get enough votes, then he went to war anyway because he had decided to go to war regardless.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention to the—

Mr. Myron Thompson: Shut your mouth and sit down. Your government sure does not know anything about democracy, that is for damned sure.

The Deputy Speaker: I know that there are some very strongly held views on a very emotional debate, but let us run the business not only according to the standards, but the spirit of this place.

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Mr. Speaker, I only wanted to draw the attention of the hon. member to an interesting article this morning in the *Globe and Mail*, by Joseph Nye, who is head of the Kennedy foreign policy institute at Harvard. My eye caught that because he had come before a standing committee.

He made mention this morning that had the Canadian initiative, from his perspective, which set out very clear benchmarks and a firm timeline, been given more time, it might have been conducive to movement on this issue. Would the hon. member wish to comment on Professor Nye's advisement?

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, it is apropos to make a reference to what happened during the Cuban missile crisis under Kennedy and what is happening now. Kennedy could have also declared war. All the chiefs of staff were pushing him to blast away against the Russians. He said to his cabinet and his chiefs of staff that the consequences of war were impossible to imagine. He used tactics and strategy to diffuse the issue. He used force, not as a means of war, but to diffuse the possibilities of war.

If the Canadian initiative had been followed, if more time had been given, if timelines and objectives had been given to Iraq with the tremendous power that was sitting on its doorstep, Iraq would

Supply

have complied. We would not have had to check whether bombs fall in the right place or fall next door. It is very easy to say that it is precision bombing. At the end of it all it will be interesting to find out how many people were maimed or killed or went without food because of this wonderful precision of our bombs, smart or otherwise.

• (1745)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could help me understand something.

When the defence minister said this morning that Canada is remaining true to its multinational relations and the United Nations, which is the excuse that the Prime Minister used for us not going to war, he failed to take into account Kosovo where the United Nations sanction was not sought and yet Canada joined with others and went in. Why this double standard? Can this member help me understand why we bombed Kosovo without the United Nations sanction, and yet, again without the United Nations sanction, the government is using this as an excuse for not going in to Iraq?

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that there is an inconsistency there.

Certainly, there was no United Nations sanction for Kosovo. I suggest to him that circumstances were completely different. Kosovo was backed by the overwhelming approval of the world at large. Most of the countries that today are resisting this war in Iraq approved Kosovo. A genocide was actively going on against the Kosovo people in Bosnia. This is not the case in today's war in Iraq.

The United Nations said there was no case for justifying a war because Iraq was disarming. There was no active genocide going on in Iraq although in the past it had been the case. This regime was being enfeebled completely. It was not possible for Iraq to threaten the world at large or the United States for that matter or its own population. That is why more time was asked for by UN inspectors and most of the nations of the United Nations.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, for sharing his time with me in order to give me a chance to discuss this important subject.

I would like to begin by offering my sincere condolences to the American, British and Iraqi families that have lost family members in the war against Iraq triggered by the military coalition led and directed by the United States.

I am very proud of our government's decision not to take part in this war, which does not have the explicit support of the United Nations, via the Security Council. It has always been my position that we have worked and made sacrifices—here in Canada, but also in other countries around the world—to set up a multilateral institution to resolve disputes that could lead to attacks using force in this world.

Supply

This institution that we helped build was the United Nations. However, it is the only forum we have. Since the issue of Iraq came to the forefront and became a priority for certain countries, including the United States, I was among those who said that the United Nations, through its Security Council, was the appropriate place to determine the actions that should or should not be taken vis-à-vis the Iraqi government and its non-compliance with previous UN resolutions on chemical, nuclear and biological weapons.

• (1750)

[English]

I am proud of our government's decision and of the House of Commons that voted by an overwhelming majority to pass a motion which supported the government's decision not to participate in the military action against Iraq led by the United States.

However, I wish to make clear to the House that I am not anti-American. I am half American. My father was an American citizen who immigrated to Canada, but never became a Canadian citizen because he was proud of his American citizenship and it did not in any way diminish his pride as a landed immigrant or permanent resident in Canada.

I have family in the United States. I have cousins, uncles, aunts, second cousins and a sister who live in the United States. My heart goes out to those American families who have members of their families participating in the war against Iraq. I hope that besides the casualties that have already taken place, which is very tragic, that the rest will return home to their families safe and sound.

At the same time, I cannot in good conscience support the motion that is being debated. There are four points to the motion, three of which I support completely. The second point calls for the House to:

express its unequivocal support for the Canadian service men and women, and other personnel serving in an exchange program with the United States and for those service men and women performing escort duties for British and United States ships, our full confidence in them and the hope that all will return safely to their homes;

I support that 100%. The third point asks the House to:

extend to the innocent people of Iraq its support and sympathy during the military action to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and the reconstruction period that will follow;...

I support that 100%. Point four asks the House to:

urge the government to commit itself to help the Iraqi people, including through humanitarian assistance, to build a new Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours.

I support that 100%. What I cannot support is the first point in the Canadian Alliance opposition day motion which calls on the House to:

endorse the decision of the Allied international coalition of military forces to enforce Iraq's compliance with its international obligations under successive resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, with a view to restoring international peace and security in the Middle East region;

I would love to see international peace and security restored in the Middle East region, but that region is comprised of more than just Iraq. That is the first thing. Second, the House has already, by an overwhelming majority, supported the government's decision not to endorse the decision of the allied international coalition of military

forces, that is, not to support war led by the United States, the U.K. and Spain against the Iraqi regime.

Do I support Saddam Hussein? No, I do not, not in any way, shape or form. However, there is a great tradition in our country of peace, conciliation, reconciliation, mediation and peacekeeping. The decision that was made by the government on behalf of our country, not to endorse military action against the Iraqi government without the explicit approval of the Security Council, is in the tradition of this country. It is that tradition that has made our country great and has made our country a welcomed country around the world. It has allowed us to be effective on the diplomatic front, many times not in the papers. We are not going before the microphones, not this government nor preceding governments of other political persuasions.

• (1755)

A lot of Canada's force has been done behind the scenes. We have been able to get many countries of varying political ilk to listen and to actually follow some of our advice precisely because we have been seen as a country of peace and as a country that moves through multilateral forums.

The United Nations is our multilateral forum. It is our instrument. Those who would say that we should not follow the United Nations' decision not to endorse military action against Iraq are asking for the diminishment of its credibility and the diminishment of any possibility that it could continue to do good work in the future. Then what would we have? We would have no multilateral forum. We would have no instrument for countries that do not have a superpower economy or a superpower military armed forces to get some kind of justice if they are being bullied around by a larger country.

It is no different from a family. In a family parents are there to ensure that there is equity for their children, that their children all have a chance regardless of those children's capabilities. That is what the United Nations Security Council is there for. It is imperfect, but it is the only instrument we have.

In terms of the other three points of the motion, I have no problem and I would welcome being able to vote on each one individually. That would allow each member in the House to actually express their views on each separate point. As long as the four points remain one vote, I will not be able to support the motion. I regret that because I do think three-quarters of the motion is good. I would welcome the support of my colleagues on this side of the House to paragraphs two, three and four of the motion.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, at several points in the debate, including in the speech immediately preceding her own, for instance, we heard from the member for Lac-Saint-Louis say that the United States is a villain and a culprit in this matter because it was in fact, he claimed and many have claimed today, the principal arms supplier of Iraq in the 1980s. I would like to ask the member to reflect on whether she shares this view.

Supply

Perhaps she could comment on the report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute which keeps a database of the arms transfers. It reported that the Soviet Union delivered \$17 billion in major conventional arms to Iraq in the 1980s. China shipped \$5.2 billion and France transferred \$4.9 billion. The other big players were Czechoslovakia, Poland, Brazil, Egypt and Romania. The United States was at the bottom of the list at \$200 million, one-fifteenth of the weapons trade to the Iraqi regime from France.

Would the member care to speculate on whether the \$22 billion in weapons provided by Russia and France to the Iraqi regime, in addition to the very substantial oil concessions recently signed with the Iraqi regime, may have in some way influenced their decision to exercise a veto against the implementation of 1441?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Southeast has raised some very important points. They are points that I was already aware of.

I have no problem in suspecting that some of the permanent members of the Security Council had their own reasons for threatening a veto. I actually think that the United States committed a major strategic error by not actively endorsing Canada's proposal for a new resolution that set out clear dates, the last of which would have been April 8, for Iraq to clearly comply with resolution 1441 in terms of disarmament.

If the United States had supported Canada's proposal, in my view it would have had an overwhelming approval by the members of the Security Council. It would have been voted in the Security Council. One of the permanent members, possibly France, Russia, China or Germany, might have, and probably would have, vetoed it. Then we would have had a situation where the overwhelming majority of the members of the Security Council supported military action and one or two permanent members, against the will of the majority, vetoed it. That would have made an entirely different situation for the United States, for the U.K., for Spain and also for Canada, in terms of how we may have viewed supporting or endorsing military action against Iraq.

The United States decided not to support Canada's diplomatic efforts to get that other resolution through. It decided to simply not put any resolution before the Security Council and gave a 48 hour ultimatum to Saddam Hussein. I think that was a major strategic error on the part of the United States. It would have had the majority of the world in its favour because it would have had the moral victory within the Security Council.

• (1800)

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to draw the member's attention to an article that appeared in the *National Post* on Friday, which is a reprint of an article by Richard Perle, who is the chairman of the Defence Policy Board which advises the Pentagon.

He says in the article that "when you get rid of Saddam Hussein by force, it will be the end of the United Nations." Then he says:

Well, not the whole United Nations. The "good works" part will survive, the low-risk peacekeeping bureaucracies will remain, the looming chatterbox on the Hudson will continue to bleat.

He does go on to say we have to get rid of the United Nations and bring democracy to these countries by force.

What are we to do with advisers to the president who have such a low opinion of the kind of civil discourse, the democratic discourse, that exists in the United Nations that he terms as merely a chatterbox where people bleat?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, I deplore any attempts to weaken and diminish the United Nations as our sole, multilateral instrument forum for dealing with disputes between nations.

On the other hand, I would certainly support our government actively working to attempt to see that the United Nations, and in particular, the Security Council be less politicized and that individual members act less in their own personal pecuniary interest and more in the interests of people across the world in general. I would certainly support that.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am displeased that I have to rise in debate on this motion because this is, I think, the fourth time now that an opposition party in this Parliament has had to bring the issue forward.

We have been debating this matter for several months and in that period not once has the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or the Minister of National Defence come before the House and briefed us on Canada's policy, on how its interests are at play, on the disposition of our military or on any of the details of our cloaked foreign diplomacy in this matter. This compares to the Westminster parliament where week after week senior ministers reported to their parliament, where votes were put to their parliament, serious votes which, yes, may have divided parties but had a real democratic result.

The conduct of our House under the leadership of the government is evidence of how shamefully the House and the government treat matters of vital international interest and international security.

Let me begin by addressing the complete absurdity and hypocrisy of the government's shifting position on this matter. The government claims that we are not participating and it will not vote for this motion when we are not participating in the action to enforce resolution 1441 and the 16 preceding UN Security Council resolutions, that we are not participating in the action to liberate the Iraqi people from the world's most brutal dictator because this did not have the explicit sanction of the United Nations. Let us look at the record.

In 1990 when this House was faced with the first Gulf war and resolutions 660, 678 and 675 had been passed by the UN Security Council by votes of 14 to 1, the then leader of the opposition and now Prime Minister, cared not a whit about UN sanction and he opposed Canadian military action in the Gulf at that time. He did not care about a UN sanction in 1990. At the last minute when he saw public opinion supporting our troops, he crawled halfway to supporting Canadian participation but only so long as our troops were not actually engaged in any military action.

Supply

Then in 1998 when it was clear that the Iraqi regime was not cooperating for the umpteenth time with weapons inspectors, that Iraq was nine years past its legal obligation under the ceasefire agreement of 1991, had violated by that point 12 Security Council resolutions and the UNPROFOR team had left Iraq, the Prime Minister then supported Operation Desert Fox. He supported the use of a major military force to try to compel the Iraqi regime to comply with UN resolutions. He did so even though such a force had absolutely no sanction explicitly by the United Nations.

Then in 1999 when we faced the genocide in Kosovo, of course we all know the Prime Minister ordered without the consent of this House and against a threatened veto of the Security Council, the Canadian air force to participate in bombing runs against Serbian targets for three months without UN sanction. He gives not a whit about UN endorsement of military action.

Indeed for the past nine years the Marsh Arabs and Shia in the south of Iraq and the Kurds in the north of Iraq have been sheltered from genocidal attacks by the Baath regime in Iraq only because of the brave and costly operation of no-fly zones by British and American air forces without any explicit UN sanction. I have not heard a peep of objection from the government on the purported illegalities of that military action to defend the Iraqi people from their own regime.

There is no consistency when it comes to the government. There have been many opinions expressed about the legality or illegality of this action. I would refer members to the legal opinions proffered by the right hon. the attorney general of the United Kingdom, by the Liberal attorney general of our Commonwealth ally of Australia, or to any number of legal opinions which make it patently clear that the terms of the ceasefire agreement, which included a 15 day deadline for disarmament in 1991, have been violated.

●(1805)

That is a legitimate *casus belli*, 4,300 days following their failure to comply with that ceasefire which was a condition predicated for the cessation of hostilities in 1991. That resolution 678 authorizes the use of force for the implementation of subsequent UN resolutions regarding Iraq. It is absolutely clear. Of course, the *pièce de résistance* was 1441, unanimously passed under chapter 7 of the UN charter, finding Iraq in material breach of 16 resolutions and providing it with a final opportunity for full, immediate and unconditional co-operation.

No one here could possibly argue that such a standard was met. The test for the United Nations and the international community at that time, and today, was whether the words of the United Nations meant something or whether it had become an irrelevant talking shop, the chatterbox like the League of Nations which allowed Mussolini to march into Abyssinia without action and which became completely paralyzed and unable preventively to stop Adolf Hitler from his aggressive designs in Europe.

We find ourselves today in an analogous legal situation to the one that Europe found itself in 1938. Europe and the civilized world failed that test. Thank God some countries have learned from history. It is to our shame that we do not count ourselves within their number.

The government says that Kosovo was a humanitarian urgency. Therefore, we could suspend the government's punctilious legal attitude toward legality of UN sanction for the use of force. Let us be clear about this, as Kenneth Pollack, a liberal foreign policy advisor to former President Clinton, now perhaps the leading expert on Iraq and author of the principled book on this subject, has said, "Saddam Hussein is one of the most terrible dictators of the last 50 years". He said that he could be compared to Hitler and Stalin in brutality. He went on to say that in Kosovo "some 8,000 persons had been killed in Milosevic's ethnic cleansing campaign by the time NATO intervened". He said that it was a tragedy that he did not for a moment dismiss and that in fact, he supported military intervention.

He goes on to say:

—as many as a million Iraqis have died at the hands of Saddam Hussein over the last 25 years, and they've died in horrific fashion. War can be justified by the need "to rid the world of this degree of inhumanity".

We intervened to save a few thousand people in Kosovo. Let us again be clear, there has been ongoing military activity in Iraq without UN sanction for the past 10 years on humanitarian grounds.

As Walter Russell Mead has argued in the liberal *Washington Post*, that given the number of people dying as a result of sanctions, which are part of the government's callous policy of containment in Iraq, that if Saddam were to live for another 10 years in control of that country where no dissent is broached, at least another 360,000 Iraqis would die, 240,000 of whom would be children under five, not even considering the thousands of Iraqis who would die as a result of his genocidal policy against the Kurds, the Shia, the Marsh Arabs, not considering the brutality that he would visit upon dissidents in his regime.

Let me close by saying that I have had before the House now for six years a motion in support of the creation of a special international tribunal to indict and prosecute Saddam and his worst cronies in that Fascist regime for crimes against humanity, for war crimes and for genocide. I do not need to go through the evidence of that.

The Government of Canada has done precisely nothing to support efforts to create such a tribunal through the United Nations. The International Criminal Court does not apply because it only considers crimes committed after July 1, 2002.

Is it not interesting to note that it is Russia and France, according to Human Rights Watch, that have threatened to veto UN Security Council resolutions to create an international tribunal to try Saddam and his henchmen.

●(1810)

I submit that when members of the UN, particularly permanent members according to Human Rights Watch, take a position motivated by "their extensive business interests" and override the very demands of the United Nations when it comes to security and the humanitarian needs of populations like the Iraqi people, that does not constitute a legitimate reason for a champion of democracy and human rights like Canada to stand on the sidelines and to take a holiday from history. Shame on this government for what it has done to our 50 years of proud activism in foreign policy.

Adjournment Debate

•(1815)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:15 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made earlier today, the vote stands deferred until Tuesday, March 25 at 3 p.m.

Is there agreement that we see the clock as being 6:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the war has not substantially improved the plight of the people of Afghanistan.

When the allies, including Canada, let the warlords, including the Northern Alliance, form the new Afghani government, they gave power to rapists.

Between 1992 and 1996, the Northern Alliance gratuitously killed and massacred, sowing terror in Kabul. They forced women in Afghanistan to wear the veil. They also hold the record for the most rapes of girls and women aged seven to seventy in that country.

There is a long list of massacres. They deserve to be judged by the international court. Canada, as an ally, turned power over to them. The Minister for International Cooperation announced last week that Canada would provide an additional \$250 million in assistance to Afghanistan.

The money will fund four priorities established by the government of Afghanistan: community development, natural resource management, heightened security and improved legislation, and support for the current government.

While Canadian reports, including those from Rights & Democracy and from Afghan-Canadian women, are condemning the Afghan government in power and urging donor countries to suspend all financial and military assistance to warlords and find practical ways of helping the Afghan people, the Canadian government is announcing millions of dollars in funding for that government.

Granted, the United Nations reported that the situation of Afghan women has improved since our allies went in, but one might wonder what was the basis for this statement. Is the fact that women are no longer required to wear the burka indicative of a real change in attitude? They have seen their access to education, health care and employment improve, but they are still living in an unsafe environment.

These women are no fools. They know who is in power. They live every day in the fear of a return of the terror of the 1990s. They continue to wear the burka for their protection. The ruling Northern Alliance is destroying any chance of change. Human Rights Watch reported that the situation of women has even deteriorated in some regions of Afghanistan. They are now allowed to study, but their schools are being burned down. Moreover, women are the victims of organized abuse by local governments. The rules put in place by the Taliban are still in force in some parts of the country.

We know that Iraq is a country that does not respect human rights, even less so when it comes to women. On a daily basis, women and men in Iraq must live under a reign of terror that is not unlike the one that used to exist in Afghanistan. As we know, any woman who exercises the right to freedom of expression runs the risk of having her tongue cut out.

Women who oppose the regime and the wives of men who oppose it are killed. This situation—and I will conclude on this—has been known for a very long time, but until now it has seldom been condemned.

Again, I ask the government: Will it ensure that the humanitarian relief it provides when the Iraq war is over will be used exclusively to help the people, and not the government, as in Afghanistan?

•(1820)

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and you for allowing me to respond. It is obvious that, instead of talking about reconstruction and aid in key sectors such as the status of Afghan women, we would rather focus more on construction. These are, however, countries in which human stupidity has reached its zenith.

I am pleased to focus on what I see as the salient points in my colleague's speech. Over the past 18 months, our government has contributed support to the reconstruction of Afghanistan on the humanitarian, diplomatic and military levels.

I should also point out that this was not done in any piecemeal way, but rather in collaboration with the international community. We have confidence in the future, and we believe that international collaboration is the route to take for providing reconstruction and assistance to those countries in greatest need.

Adjournment Debate

This collaborative effort, particularly with the United Nations organizations, impacts on a number of important sectors affecting education, health, nutrition, child survival and demining, as well as the promotion of peace and security, gender equality, human rights and the principles of good governance.

Everyone agrees that Afghani women must play a full role in the reconstruction of their country. Without them, it is not possible to build a society that is fair, egalitarian and prosperous. All the reports we are regularly seeing right now are a clear indication of how Afghanis, women in particular, are working to take charge of their destiny.

Canada supports Afghani women in many ways: by providing humanitarian aid in cooperation with international agencies; by providing support for community development initiatives; by setting up media centres for women; by supporting the brand new human rights commission; and, by providing money, equipment and technical assistance to the Ministry for Women's Affairs in Afghanistan.

By supporting the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, we will improve living conditions for Afghani women. Some \$116 million has been allocated and the minister, who is, above all, concerned with the status of Afghani women, just announced that \$250 million will be invested over the next two years. It is not perfect, but considering that international needs are on the rise, this aid is significant.

We are maintaining our commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and continuing to support Afghani women in this period of transition and development for the Afghani nation. I know that the challenges are great, and again, let us hope that one day all the international agencies and donor countries throughout the world will address a common challenge: how to help countries that need it the most to take charge of their own destiny.

That is why there is currently a series of agri-food consultations across the country examining the emergence of a private sector in the recipient countries. I think this is a promising time.

Let us hope that the penchant for war is a thing of the past and that, in cooperation with all our donor partners, we can focus on helping countries that need it the most to take charge of their own destiny.

● (1825)

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Speaker, the situation in Afghanistan is being condemned around the world. We are even more aware of this, since Ms. Samar came to visit us here on Parliament Hill, and asked for help. She is no longer a part of the government. There are virtually no more committees dealing with the status of women in Afghanistan and I would invite the parliamentary secretary to check his notes.

When it comes to Afghanistan, it seems clear to me that Canada has been had. I do not deny that Canada has given money and that it will continue to do so. However, there are no conditions attached to this money.

I would like to know if the same problem will occur in Iraq. Will the government ensure that when it gives millions of dollars, there will be conditions to ensure that the money does indeed go to helping women, children and families?

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague, I am wary of the somewhat extremist positions of the Bloc. On March 17, in connection with the conflict in Iraq, we were asked to pull out all our forces. This would have meant pulling out all those forces that are currently contributing to the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.

My colleague knows full well that we are acting in cooperation with international stakeholders, and organizations under the UN in particular. Over the next two years, \$250 million will be invested in international organizations whose role is to guide our actions.

I say, do not ask us to cease to be involved in a country like Afghanistan. In spite of huge difficulties and despite the fact that continued violence is heartbreaking, we must continue to be involved. We must try to get better results. But do not ask us to back out when there are such desperate needs.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 6:28 p.m.)

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