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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, to lay upon the table the report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

[*Translation*]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

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TLICHO AGREEMENT

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2005-09 progress report of the Tlicho agreement implementation committee.

* * *

[*English*]

GWICH'IN COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2008-09 annual report of the implementation committee on the Gwich'in comprehensive land claim agreement.

[*Translation*]

SAHTU DENE AND METIS COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2008-09 annual report of the implementation committee on the Sahtu Dene and Métis comprehensive land claim agreement.

* * *

[*English*]

INUVALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2008-09 annual report of the Inuvialuit final agreement implementation coordinating committee.

* * *

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE SENIORS AND STRENGTHENING CANADA'S ECONOMY ACT

Hon. Ted Menzies (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-3, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

CANADA SHIPPING ACT, 2001

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-211, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (prohibition against oil tankers in Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I stand today to re-introduce my private member's bill to permanently ban transportation of oil by oil supertankers off British Columbia's north coast.

Routine Proceedings

We must protect British Columbia's rugged northern coastline and coastal waters, the diversity of fish species and mammals, and the coastal communities that depend on a healthy fishing industry and a profitable ecotourism sector.

My bill would amend the Canada Shipping Act by prohibiting the transportation of oil in oil tankers along the north coast of British Columbia, specifically in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound. A major spill on the north coast would be catastrophic to the ecosystem and would negatively affect the economy in this area. It simply is not worth the risk.

I encourage all members of this House to support my bill and legislate an immediate ban on oil supertankers off the north coast of B.C.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-212, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (luring a child outside Canada).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to re-introduce legislation to strengthen the laws to protect children against child luring and abuse.

The legislation would make it illegal for any Canadian citizen or permanent resident to lure a child outside the borders of Canada.

The bill, if passed, would close a loophole in the Criminal Code. It would also make prosecution possible here at home.

I encourage all members of this House to support this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

• (1010)

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-213, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (means of communication for child luring).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise again to reintroduce legislation to strengthen laws to protect children against child luring and abuse. The legislation would expand the definition of "child luring" to include all forms of electronic communication, be it a cellular telephone or any other communication device. The legislation would provide law enforcement and the courts with additional tools to protect children from predators and would, again, close a loophole in the Criminal Code.

I encourage all members of this House to adopt the bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

PETITIONS**ASBESTOS**

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of literally thousands of

Canadians from all across Canada who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known. In fact, they point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than from all other industrial causes combined and yet they criticize the fact that the Government of Canada is still one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world. They suggest that we are exporting human misery on a monumental scale.

The petitioners also point out that Canada spends millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry. These petitioners call this corporate welfare for corporate serial killers.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms and to institute a just transition program for asbestos workers who may be laid off as a result. They also call upon government to end all government subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad.

Finally, the petitioners call upon the government to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention that is coming up later this month and which Canada consistently sabotages with teams of Department of Justice lawyers like globe-trotting propagandists for the asbestos industry. They insist that the Government of Canada stops this promoting of asbestos.

SENIORS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of constituents and others who are, in essence, calling upon the government to increase support to our seniors in terms of pensions.

Canadians are very much aware, in terms of the policy direction of the government, of it prioritizing things such as corporation tax breaks while, at the same time, not providing the necessary funds in order for many of our seniors to have a decent lifestyle.

The petitioners are asking the government to look at ways in which it can increase pensions.

It was a pleasure to bring this petition before this chamber.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

•(1015)

*[English]***LIBYA****Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC)** moved:

That, in standing in solidarity with those seeking freedom in Libya, the House unanimously adopted a motion in the Third Session of the 40th Parliament on March 21, 2011, authorizing all necessary measures, including the use of the Canadian Forces and military assets in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973; and given that the House unanimously agreed that should the government require an extension to the involvement of the Canadian Forces for more than three months from the passage of the said motion, the government was to return to the House at its earliest opportunity to debate and seek the consent of the House for such an extension; therefore the House consents to another extension of three and a half months of the involvement of the Canadian Forces in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1973; that the House deplores the ongoing use of violence by the Libyan regime against the Libyan people, including the alleged use of rape as a weapon of war by the Libyan regime; that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development and the Standing Committee on National Defence remain seized of Canada's activities under UNSC Resolution 1973; and that the House continues to offer its wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces who stand on guard for all of us.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I begin my formal remarks, I once again thank the people of Ottawa West—Nepean for their confidence and trust. I will work tirelessly on their behalf each and every day.

It is an honour to stand in this place and speak to the motion before us. It is an honour because I am proud of the part that Canada has played in the mission to protect the Libyan people from their rulers. It is a mission that is not over yet. The push for a more free and fair Libya is a cause that is not yet achieved, so Canada and its international partners must continue to show resolve, patience and determination to go the distance and help Libyans secure their future.

We must extend our military mission there, we must redouble our diplomatic efforts and we must continue to increase humanitarian aid. That is what our government proposes going forward. The hon. members who will speak for the government over the course of today's debate will elaborate on a suite of actions that we are proposing.

[Translation]

While the citizens of Libya contemplate and prepare for the establishment of a constitutional state, modern and respectful of human rights, Colonel Gadhafi, without the slightest concern for his country, is practising a true scorched-earth policy. We continue to believe that without the intervention of the international community and the adoption of resolution 1973, Benghazi, the home of the opposition who were within range of Gadhafi's forces in March, would have been utterly devastated.

Remember the threat launched by Gadhafi himself: "The decision has been made. Get ready, we are coming tonight," he said in an audio message sent to Benghazi and broadcast on Libyan television.

He promised to search "house by house" and to show no mercy. However, because of our decisive action, Benghazi today is a vibrant community that, through the strength of its partnership projects, is inspiring to all who observe it.

[English]

Canada has been vocal in condemning the targeting of civilians by the Gadhafi regime and the impact of that regime's actions on the hundreds of thousands of people who have been trapped in Libya or, worse yet, forced to flee its borders.

This regime has chosen to wage war against its own people. In the face of this blatant disregard for both human rights and international law, Canada has demanded that the regime halt its attacks against its own people and ensure that perpetrators of crimes are brought to justice.

We have been particularly disgusted by abhorrent reports that Gadhafi and his thugs are using torture and sexual violence, rape, as weapons against the Libyan population. Such actions are international crimes and may be war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Canada calls for a full and impartial investigation of these serious allegations, so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

Canada has made significant contributions to humanitarian aid already, as my colleague will no doubt later detail. Let me say at this juncture that we are certainly prepared to do more. I am pleased to announce on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of International Cooperation, that Canada is prepared to commit an additional \$2 million in humanitarian aid for Libya. A portion of this funding will go directly to support victims of sexual violence as a tool of war. I know this is something that all parties have called for and have supported. I appreciate their wise counsel.

On March 31, this House pledged, through a unanimous motion, its support for Canada's engagement in military operations in Libya. The men and women of the Canadian Forces, working under UN sanction, have helped to avert humanitarian tragedies in eastern Libya, and they have significantly limited the regime's capacity to launch indiscriminate attacks on the innocent civilian population in the east.

The Minister of National Defence will speak more to other achievements, but as important each of these victories is, they are only stepping stones on the way to ending, in a permanent way, the capacity of this regime to wage war against its own people. We must press on.

From the outset of this crisis in Libya, Canada has supported a swift and decisive international response to this crisis. Not only did we implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1970 quickly, but we extended it further under the Special Economic Measures Act, freezing regime assets, putting in place a travel ban on regime members, and an arms embargo.

We committed fully to the enforcement of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1973, which calls for an immediate ceasefire, an arms embargo, increased sanctions, and a no-fly zone to protect civilians.

Canada was among the first to call for the UN Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court and strongly supported the creation of an international commission of inquiry into violations of basic human rights.

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The preliminary results of these inquiries have confirmed the seriousness of the crimes that are being committed. The report of the international commission of inquiry stated that these crimes are such as to indicate a policy directed by Gadhafi himself and his inner circle.

Colonel Gadhafi seeks to remain in power by committing crimes against the people. He needs to be stopped and he needs to be held accountable. He is a clear and present threat both to his people and to the stability of the region, including the emerging and promising democracies of Tunisia and Egypt.

I would note that Canada's end game is shared by our G8 partners as expressed at Deauville earlier this month. Canada's engagement has been the result of a concentrated whole of government effort. Abroad we have worked closely with international and regional partners, the League of Arab States, the African Union, and NATO partners and allies to press the regime to comply with its international obligation.

Canada has been a member of the Libya Contact Group since its inaugural meeting in Doha, Qatar in April. We participated in subsequent meetings in Rome and in Abu Dhabi last week where Canada was represented by my colleague, the associate minister of National Defence. The contact group is an organization of like-minded nations that is helping to provide leadership and to coordinate international efforts with regard to the future of Libya.

● (1020)

After three months of energetic diplomatic, military, and humanitarian engagement, the world's resolve to protect the civilians of Libya against attacks and threat of attacks from the Gadhafi regime, regrettably, has not faded. It is gaining momentum.

However, our work is far from over and so we must look at doing more in terms of humanitarian aid. We must continue our military assault on Gadhafi's command and control centres. We must also take a more robust and principled approach diplomatically if our mission is truly to succeed. Increasing our diplomatic efforts is what I would like to touch on here.

[Translation]

I am pleased to inform the House that Canada is embarking on an enhanced engagement strategy with the national transitional council of Libya, or NTC.

● (1025)

[English]

As part of this strategy, Canada will recognize the NTC as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people going forward. Our government will engage with institutions and representatives of the NTC. I will be seeking a meeting with my counterparts on the NTC, the vice-chairman and its ambassador to the United Nations. We will identify members of the NTC responsible for domestic issues and propose meetings with their Canadian counterparts.

We will also happily arrange meetings between NTC members and hon. members of this place. I know this was an engagement suggestion that was called on by my colleague in the Liberal Party, the member for Beauséjour.

We welcome the efforts of the national transitional council in defining core driving principles through its vision for a democratic Libya and its blueprint for building a post-Gadhafi Libya, the road map for Libya, outlining a transition process based on inclusiveness and based on balanced representation.

We will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the NTC to identify Libya's most pressing needs now and into the future. We will do all we can to link the NTC with Canadian expertise on governance and on civil society issues.

We hope this is the start of stronger ties between Canada and the Libyan people, and a brighter, better future for the country as a whole. The decision of this House to extend Canadian participation in the NATO mission should be accompanied by the steps outlined above, and more to come. By doing so, we will send a clear message that we are committed to fulfilling the United Nation's mandate and that we are willing to uphold our commitment to provide protection and assistance to those most vulnerable and to those most in need.

The Libya mission came out about in a unique set of circumstances. The threat to the civilian population, the threat of a massacre in Benghazi was real and imminent, coming from the mouths of the Libyan leaders themselves. The capability existed to intervene. Military assets were available and the geography made it possible. In regional terms, Libya represented and continues to represent a threat to the success of other nascent political openings in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere.

That is why the Arab League had called for action. It is why the international community, including Canada, was compelled to respond. The track record of the Gadhafi regime, of over 40 years of unpredictability and interference in the affairs of the states of Africa and the Middle East, was cause for real concern for the future.

Our strategy is clear. By applying steady and unrelenting military and diplomatic pressure, while also delivering humanitarian assistance, we can protect the civilian population, degrade the capabilities of the regime, and create the conditions for a genuine political opening. At the same time we can bolster the capacity of the Libyan opposition to meet the challenges of a post-Gadhafi Libya and to lay the foundations of a state based on the sovereignty of the people.

In conclusion, the government understands the genuine concerns of Canadians who oppose the use of lethal force and of turning to military action to resolve the problems of the international community. I believe this is an instinct that all Canadians share and is a credit to us all.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to act when we can, when our objectives are right, when our objectives are clear, to protect and to assist those who share the values and would share the institutions for which many of our ancestors gave up their lives so that we could enjoy the benefits.

Since the Libyan uprising began in February, the world community has borne witness to the tremendous courage, sacrifice and dignity of the Libyan people, and of their determination to open a new chapter in the history of their country. The Libyan people are desperate to secure a brighter future. To help secure this future, Canada must play its part.

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Let us all strongly reaffirm today that Canada, along with the international community, stands in solidarity with the legitimate and irreversible aspirations of the Libyan people.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his comments.

I want to preface my comments by thanking the people of Ottawa Centre for returning me to the House. I thank them for their trust in me.

There are a couple of things that the government said are important to note and I would like to ask the minister a couple of questions about the announcement that he has made.

Many are concerned about the status of the crisis in Libya and that it has become solely a military operation. I was heartened to hear the government say that this is absolutely about the UN resolution, strengthening diplomacy and humanitarian assistance.

I particularly want to ask about assistance to support victims who have suffered from rape and the investigation of those allegations. My question is not only with regard to support but what the government intends to do regarding prosecution and how that would work.

Could the minister give more detail to the House and to Canadians as to how the government will follow-up on the allegations of rape as a weapon of war?

• (1030)

Hon. John Baird: Madam Speaker, I thank the member from Ottawa Centre for the question and congratulate him on his appointment as critic of foreign affairs for the official opposition.

I think we all agree on the importance of this being a United Nations sanctioned effort. Yes, there is a very strong military aspect to it authorized by the United Nations. However, I think it goes without saying that we must take a diplomatic and humanitarian approach to the effort as well.

The government is committed to expanding its efforts diplomatically. This will be a major part of the solution and we acknowledge that. I certainly thank both opposition parties for their counsel on that.

With respect to humanitarian assistance, there is a real need as there is real suffering going on. Therefore, today we have announced \$2 million in additional funds to support humanitarian efforts.

The issue of rape being used as a weapon of war I think is abhorrent to every Canadian. The government would like to put some effort not just on the social side of providing assistance to victims of this heinous crime but also at the International Criminal Court. We must send a message when this is coordinated as an act of war that the international community will hold those accountable. That is something every Canadian strongly believes in and which this government will work with the International Criminal Court to support.

The Minister of International Cooperation has recently put great effort into this issue. This is of significant concern to all members in the House and one in which Canada will put effort and focus.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I was very pleased to hear the minister talk about some of the new initiatives the government is planning. I can tell that the government anticipates the amendments our party will be moving this morning to the motion. I think they will be entirely compatible with what is being proposed.

I want to make sure that the minister understands that to move forward on the diplomatic front, as he has suggested, to move forward with the recognition of the Libyan national council as a legitimate political entity, as a representative of the Libyan people, and provide governance assistance, as well as add our support to the International Criminal Court, that these initiatives have to be matched by funds.

On the governance field, in particular, I can tell the minister that one of the central problems is that neither his department nor CIDA have a clear mandate with respect to Canadian assistance on governance. This whole area of governance has fallen into a black hole between those two departments. I would plead with the minister to investigate this question.

If we are going to deal with governance, which in this party we strongly believe we have to, then we need to support those institutions in the country as well as within government in order to provide that governance assistance, in this case, to the Libyan national council, and there are many other examples where it needs to be done.

Adding to the humanitarian and diplomatic work of Canada is exactly the direction we have been urging the government to go. I very much appreciate the minister's comments today on that score.

• (1035)

Hon. John Baird: Madam Speaker, let me say to the leader of the Liberal Party, I appreciate his counsel and thoughts on this issue, both in this place and earlier, and also the engagement of the member for Beauséjour on this issue. I share his view that supporting good governance by the council will be important, and I will certainly take his counsel with respect to how that can best be supported by Canada, whether it is a whole of government approach or through other institutions in Canada or internationally. I will certainly take his wise counsel under advisement.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the minister on his speech and for bringing this issue before Parliament, allowing us an opportunity to debate the relevance of and need to extend this mission by another 90 days.

I appreciate his comments that we want to make sure that we can provide support for governance, to help them mature the next government that comes into play, and to make sure that we address the issue of humanitarian assistance.

Really, what we are talking about is that the situation still requires some military action, because we have to make conditions right to be able to get the relief agencies on the ground to provide that humanitarian assistance and to put the diplomats in place, so that we can provide that instruction on governance in helping the Libyans transition as they go through this change, we hope, away from Colonel Gadhafi and his regime.

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I want the minister to address that need and to talk about the leadership that Canada is showing in the NATO alliance, with the air strikes being orchestrated under the command of General Bouchard, and talk about the care that has been taken to ensure that we are targeting hard assets and Gadhafi's military.

Hon. John Baird: Madam Speaker, the member for Selkirk—Interlake is a leading member of the defence committee. I share his views that Canada is certainly punching above its weight in this effort.

Hon. Bob Rae: Not above Deepak's weight.

Hon. John Baird: Leave my friend alone, I say to the leader of the Liberal Party, Madam Speaker. The member for Calgary East is the best boss I have ever had.

Let me say this, that Canadians can be very proud of the leadership of General Bouchard, as the member for Selkirk—Interlake has said. He represents the very best of the men and women who wear the uniform in this country. As the motion states, we should acknowledge the great contribution of the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces. They are doing a phenomenal job and I know all members in this place support their great efforts.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, there have been some concerns expressed lately about the fact that the concentration of the mission is being directed toward regime change. I want to put to the minister a quote from Lieutenant General Bouchard from Monday's *Globe and Mail*, where he talks about Colonel Gadhafi and the indiscriminate attacks he has made on neighbourhoods, et cetera. Then he went on to say, "but my job is not regime change".

I want to emphasize that, because there have been comments made by some government people in Canada and some other countries. Would the minister confirm that in fact is the correct position and that regime change is not the role of the military mission in Libya?

Hon. John Baird: Madam Speaker, I do agree with the member for St. John's East and the comments by General Bouchard.

Obviously, we have the UN sanctioned mission. It is to protect civilians. It goes without saying that at the political level, apart from military issues, all G8 leaders and most actors in the world believe that Colonel Gadhafi must go. He is now wanted by the International Criminal Court and, of course, he has to face the full consequences of his actions. There is a significant and real concern that as long as he holds political power in Libya, a vulnerable population, those seeking the rule of law, those seeking human rights and freedom and democracy, will be at risk.

However, I can confirm to the member that General Bouchard certainly does speak for the government in that regard.

● (1040)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion before the House with regard to the crisis in Libya and the potential extension of Canada's participation in the mission that we entered last March. I will make comments and then propose amendments in my remarks.

If we look at the timeline of this issue and its trajectory, we really have to go back not to Tripoli or Benghazi or Misrata but to the events that happened in Tunisia. We are all well aware of what

happened there, where the so-called Arab spring was launched. It is important to note the similarities between what happened in Tunisia and Egypt and Libya, but there are profound differences in each of these situations, and I will elaborate on them later.

What is notable in all of these situations and in what is happening in Yemen, Syria and Jordan, and the list goes on, is that the people of the respective countries have decided to hold their regimes to account. This is unprecedented in modern history in the region. It is something worthy of note, particularly for these countries in a post-colonial era, where the people themselves have decided they will set the agenda, that they will decide who is going to lead them and to throw off the shackles of oppression and suppression.

On February 15 in Benghazi, riots were triggered by the arrest of a human rights activist, and that is important for people to note. There was finally a coalescence of humanitarian action around those who typically have been isolated, arrested and tortured. People said they would no longer stand by and watch their fellow citizens jailed and oppressed. The riots soon turned into a fight against government forces, with protestors peacefully demanding that Colonel Gadhafi step down, similar to the situations in Tunisia and Egypt.

Just days later on February 21, two Libyan air force pilots decided to defect because they were ordered to use their monopoly on violence, as it were, in this case their jets, to massacre their fellow citizens. It was just after that on February 24 that anti-government forces coalesced around Misrata, evicting forces loyal to Gadhafi.

On February 27, we saw the first UN resolution, resolution 1970, which looked to impose sanctions on Gadhafi and his family. On March 1, the UN General Assembly suspended Libya's membership of the Human Rights Council, and aid agencies reported at that point that 147,000 people had fled Libya for Tunisia and Egypt.

It was on March 5 that the Libyan National Council met in Benghazi and declared itself the representative of the Libyan people.

On March 6, the former Jordanian foreign minister was appointed by the UN as a special envoy to Libya. The next day a regional flash appeal for the Libyan crisis was launched by aid agencies, and foreign workers started to flee Libya.

On March 9, over 100 physicians who were deployed in eastern Libya by the Arab Medical Union coalesced to support the humanitarian crisis there. I might note that many Canadian Libyan doctors and civil society coalesced in support of the humanitarian crisis.

● (1045)

It was on March 10 that forces loyal to Gadhafi bombed the oil town of Brega and took control of another town nearby, just west of Tripoli. It was then that we started to hear calls, after this massacre and bombing, by the Arab League. It was on March 12 that the Arab League called on the UN to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.

There was also support from the African Union, which expressed:

[Its] deep concern at the prevailing situation in Libya, which poses a serious threat to peace and security in that country and in the region as a whole, as well as to the safety and dignity of Libyans and of the migrant workers, notably the African ones, living in Libya. [The] Council is equally deeply concerned with the resulting humanitarian situation.

It was after the cry for help from both the Arab League and the African Union that on March 17 the UN Security Council voted on resolution 1973, which authorized a no-fly zone and all necessary measures to protect civilians from the government forces.

On March 20, Libya declared a ceasefire. The problem was that it continued to oppress its citizens and use violence against them, which clearly showed the cards of the regime, that it was not serious about a ceasefire at that point.

On March 24 NATO was given command to enforce the no-fly zone. It did not take full control of that until other countries signed on. I might note that Canada was joined in the mission by countries like Norway, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, the U.K., France, Italy, Turkey, Qatar, UAE, Jordan and Morocco.

These are important points because many people have forgotten how we got here. The fact of the matter is that we were asked by the African Union, the Arab League and the United Nations to act, and that is why we supported the initial motion of the House.

As has been noted by many, there have been many changes on the ground. For that reason, I think amendments are required to support the humanitarian concerns that exist, especially the internally displaced people and refugees resulting from this conflict; to ensure that we investigate and prosecute rape as a weapon of war, which is something my party has asked for in places like the Congo; and to ensure that there is a strengthened diplomatic pledge by the government to ensure that we fall in line with UN resolution 1973.

I say this because it is not a crisis that will be solved by Canada, by NATO or by more bombing, but by diplomatic and humanitarian pursuit and making sure that the UN is in the lead and is coordinating matters. For the New Democratic Party, it is absolutely important that the UN is involved. I say that because some would put their trust only in regional representation. We in the NDP believe that the UN is the right body to coordinate a crisis of the proportion we have seen in Libya.

I might also note that Libya has challenges. Libya is different from Tunisia and Egypt. It is in some ways about having to look at not just democratic development, as has been mentioned and is certainly true, but also at state formation. For 40 years we have seen one person dominate that particular state, tear down institutions and ensure that he has full power over the people of Libya. So there is a problem and challenge there that is different from the other two countries I have mentioned.

It is also clear to all that if we are to pursue the UN resolution in a way that is meaningful, we need to strengthen diplomatic support. I was glad to hear the minister announce that there would be recognition of the national council.

• (1050)

I would also hope that we work with the diaspora community here. I also would hope that we would see a continued support for

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diplomatic efforts. Without that, we are not living within the spirit of UN Resolution 1973.

Finally, I want to touch on the need for full accountability and transparency.

I realize that after the initial motion was passed in this House we were in an election. However, it is absolutely imperative that the House and Parliament are seized with this issue through our committees of Parliament and that we actually live up to the same standards as other countries when it comes to transparency of our military mission as well as humanitarian and diplomatic efforts. For that, we believe an amendment is required that is in line with the spirit of the motion as presented.

I also believe we need to ensure that we have not only what was mentioned today by the minister, more humanitarian support, but that it needs to be explicit in the motion as well, and I think that amendments are required for that.

Finally, we have to say after three and a half months of a military commitment to the mission, that would be it. However, that is something that we will abide by, in terms of this motion, in terms of a three and a half month commitment. It is important that amendments be made to assure Canadians that this is not just about a military mission, that this is about making sure we live to the spirit of UN Resolution 1973. For that, I would like to amend the motion with the following. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

(a) substituting the word “consent” with the word “support” and the word “consents” with the word “supports”;

(b) adding after the word, “therefore”, the following:

“, with the objective of protecting civilians,”

(c) adding after the words “with UNSC Resolution 1973”; the following:

“the House supports an increase in Canada’s humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis and efforts to strengthen Canada’s support for the diplomatic efforts outlined in UNSCR 1973 to reach a ceasefire leading to a Libyan-led political transition, and supports the government’s commitment to not deploy Canadian ground troops”

(d) adding after the words “war by the Libyan regime” the following:

“and supports Canada’s participation in the international effort in investigating, preventing and prosecuting these alleged crimes;” and

(e) adding after the words “under UNSC Resolution 1973” the following:

“, appreciates the government’s full and continued co-operation on committee meetings and the sharing of information in accordance with the highest levels of transparency practised by our partners in the operation”

I submit these amendments and I look forward to the House supporting them.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The amendments are in order; therefore, we will proceed with questions and comments.

Government Orders

•(1055)

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, first let me congratulate my colleague for winning in the election and coming back as a foreign affairs critic. He and I have been sharing this portfolio for almost five years since Conservatives formed the government. We have a lot of respect for each other. I am glad to have him back as the NDP critic for foreign affairs.

I have a simple question. The member for St. John's East asked the minister about a regime change. On many of the issues that are being debated by panels, the member is always talking about regime change. The minister made it very clear that the military operation is not about a regime change. However, it needs to be made very clear.

I would like to know the NDP's position on this situation. As long as Mr. Gadhafi stays in power, how can we expect him to bring peace to that country? How can we expect him to not target his people as per the mandate that we have received from the UN?

It becomes critically important that while we do not have a military operation for a regime change, the need for Mr. Gadhafi to go as quickly as possible to bring peace to that country remains paramount.

I would like to know if the NDP agrees that Mr. Gadhafi needs to go, so that we can expect peace to return and to continue to work as was put in an amendment and as the minister said in his speech?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for the question and look forward to spirited debate in the next number of months and even years.

This is a critical point for Canadians. We cannot decide on whom we like and do not like and go around the world taking out people we do not like. We have to abide by UN resolutions by international law.

My response to the parliamentary secretary would be to quote Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, who recently said the following in the press in reference to Gadhafi.

"This is someone is giving orders to go and kill his own people... He has lost his moral authority to lead his nation...but my job is not regime change."

It could not be more clear that the job of the House and of the Government of Canada is not to decide on the regime, but it is to make sure that we protect civilians. That is why, in our amendments, we have made sure that it is explicit. I would caution the government not to wander off into that kind of language. It does not help the mission, it does not help the people of Libya, and it does not help us do our work here.

Let us live within the spirit of the UN resolution. Let us live within the spirit of what we have agreed to as a responsible nation state.

•(1100)

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, I want to congratulate the Government of Canada on the Libyan

mission. It is about time that the national transitional council was recognized as the legitimate government. Better late than never.

But, I am a bit concerned by the fact that we are taking such a piecemeal approach to this. Every time I see a situation like the one in Libya, I think about General Roméo Dallaire and Rwanda. Canada is a citizen of the world and must be involved in helping civilians. I would like my NDP colleague to speak more about the overall situation in the Maghreb, which includes Egypt as well as Libya. How can we avoid taking a piecemeal approach to these countries, given that the entire Jasmine Revolution will be affected?

Second, Canada is unfortunately often lacking in terms of foreign policy. A military operation should not dictate how things are done. In a democracy, the military carries out foreign affairs decisions. Does the member think that Canada should be playing a more active role in diplomacy?

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar: Madam Speaker, of course we should be doing more and we have been critical of the government for not doing more. We think there should be an increase in the aid budget and that we should ensure we are investing in diplomacy abroad. We should actually be doing something the government promised in the throne speech, which was to have an institute for democratic development. This would be something that would aid the crises in Libya and other places.

A very important question is, "why Libya; why not—?" and then fill in the blank. It could be: "why not Syria?" or "why not Yemen?". We need to be seized of that important question, particularly in the case of Syria.

However, let us not be fooled by the fact that there are some people who would look to what is happening in Libya and say there should not be any intervention and support at all. Think about that. I think of the comments made by Maher Arar just yesterday. He said that we need to ensure that the UN intercedes with Syria. However, that is not to turn our back on Libya. We need to see strong, committed support in terms of diplomacy, in terms of a resolution and in terms of ensuring the United Nations is front and centre in that.

Could Canada do more? Absolutely. Should we pressure the government to do that, in particular with the situation in Syria? Quite obviously. That is something we will continue to debate in this House in the next number of weeks.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, there has been some discussion in the press particularly, and I go back to the time of the first resolution before this House on March 21. The suggestion was that there was no debate or discussion and that this was something people just did haphazardly. However, the member will know that in the weekend preceding that particular resolution for the House, there was much discussion between the parties that were involved regarding that resolution. One focus of the discussion was to have the resolution changed to say that not just military, but all aspects of UN Resolution 1973 are supported, endorsed and urged upon the government to pursue.

Government Orders

I wonder if he would comment on what has happened since then. My perception is that the focus has been almost entirely and solely on the military aspects of the resolution. Would he comment on that and why we are bringing forth the amendments we are making today?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Madam Speaker, it is important to remind people that when we initially passed the motion in the House in March, it was amended. That was to ensure that we did follow UN Resolution 1973, but also that we would not have ground troops and that we would ensure there was a timeline. The reason we are here today debating the motion is we wanted to make sure there was a timeline.

Those amendments matter because they ensured Canadians and us as parliamentarians, that it was not a blank cheque. I agree with my colleague from St. John's East that there needs to be more focus on the diplomatic side on the humanitarian support. That is why we put our amendments to this motion forward.

It is welcoming news that the Minister of Foreign Affairs stood today and recognized the fact that there needs to be more diplomatic and humanitarian support. We look forward to hearing more from the government on that.

● (1105)

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a bit confused about the hon. member's statement. He started out in solidarity with the oppressed in Libya and went on to suggest that we should have faith in the UN and not regional representation but then he said that we could not decide who we like and who we do not like.

I wonder if the opposition's position is to recognize Libya's rebel council as the country's sole legitimate representative.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Madam Speaker, we absolutely believe that recognizing the council would be an important element toward making progress in Libya.

We need to be clear that regional groups must be within the ambit of the United Nations. When regional representatives of the Arab League and the African Union pushed for the UN to adopt a resolution, we fully supported that.

However, for clarification, we do not support unilateral actions by NATO to involve itself without the support of the UN.

We absolutely think it would be a progressive action to recognize the council so that there is someone to work with on the ground.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time this morning with the member for Toronto Centre.

First, I thank the hon. member for appointing me as the CIDA critic in the Liberal shadow cabinet. I also thank the people of Sydney—Victoria for once again placing their trust in me to represent them here in Ottawa.

Helping people around the world in need has always been a passion of mine even before I entered politics. Since entering politics, the last 11 years I have had a lot of input on the foreign affairs committee and I have travelled to many countries to see the benefits of the help by Canadians.

As the Liberal critic for CIDA, I am honoured to stand in this House today to talk about our country's role in Libya post-Gadhafi.

I will begin by commending the brave men and women in the Canadian armed forces for the amazing job they are doing in Libya and around the world on behalf of all Canadians.

What will we see in Libya after the Gadhafi regime is gone? We will see reports of injustice toward Libyan women, men and children. We will hear more reports of mistreatment under a regime that must be dealt with. Funds will be needed for infrastructure but, most important, Libya will be without a democratic and judicial system, a basic right that we all cherish in this country.

When the G8 met at the summit last month in Deauville, the Prime Minister said that he did not intend to contribute any more funding to new democracies in Egypt, Tunisia or any other country that is now facing rebellions, such as we have seen in Libya and Syria, even though he strongly supports the democratic movements in these regions.

Democracy will not flourish without funds and proper guidance. The absence of social and government cohesion will be a tremendous obstacle in any possible transition to democracy. In fact, a post-Gadhafi Libya must first embark on a process of basic state formation, particularly the construction of a national identity and public administration, and, of course, the return of law and order before this democracy can take root.

The government seems to be in need of a bit of a history lesson. Some historians say that World War II may not have happened in Europe if the allies had assisted Germany in the reconstruction and instilling proper institutions. Instead, the victors after World War I were mostly interested in obtaining more land. The allies learned from this mistake and after World War II they set forth with a major reconstruction effort in western Europe. This was known as the Marshall Plan which was enacted in 1947 as a way to help rebuild Europe. This was also set up to discourage Communism from entering the region.

Canada also played another big role in the development of Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. We see that many of the east bloc countries have instilled our democratic institutions and our Charter of Rights in their constitutions.

Another example in Europe is the role we have played in the former Yugoslavia. We now see that justice is still moving forward in the court system.

At present, Europe is a thriving democratic region and, over the last century, Canada played a big role in making that happen.

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Another example is after the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003. Iraqis were faced with turmoil and civil war. This House and many Canadians may not know but, under the Paul Martin Liberal government, Canada pledged over \$300 million over seven years for reconstruction. The largest share of Canada's contribution of \$115 million was disbursed through the international reconstruction fund for Iraq and was managed by the World Bank and the United Nations.

Canada's support focused on the development of stable, self-governing and prosperous Iraq, with a representative and a democratic government respectful of human rights and promoting equality between women and men. The Canadian assistance in the areas of social and economic development also helped meet human needs, such as food, water and medical care.

Another more recent example of the work we are doing is in Afghanistan where we are helping it move forward as the conflicts diminish. Why are we not taking lessons learned in Afghanistan to other missions such as Libya?

• (1110)

Afghanistan is Canada's largest ever bilateral aid recipient. We are rebuilding schools, helping to build a governance structure and we are training the military and the police. We also have programs to support maternal and child health. We are doing it in Afghanistan and we must continue to do it in other countries.

Another personal experience I have witnessed with the reconstruction of another country post a notorious regime was in Panama. In 1980, Panama, under Noriega, was a police state with no democracy. The largest revenue was from the drug trade. After the fall of Noriega, the Panama Canal was handed over to the people by the U.S. and a new constitution was formed, but the economy also had to be restructured. I was asked to help with the reconstruction of its agriculture industry. I witnessed a transformation in Panama, which is now one of the most democratic and thriving countries in Central America.

Those are all examples that the House must realize have made countries vibrant and democratic.

Where is the government's post-Gadhafi strategy? The government has been notorious for its lack of detail. Why has it not put forward a more detailed plan regarding the future of a post-Gadhafi Libya or what if any role will Canada play in it? There is a known presence of extremist forces in certain areas of Libya, including some links to al-Qaeda. There is a very real fear that the extremists will gain a footing in a power vacuum that will undeniably occur once Gadhafi is finally ousted.

We know the situation we are facing in Libya. I have spoken of the great contributions Canada has made to help foster democracy. The reality is that the government has changed the way Canada operates on the world stage. By only offering to take military action and letting other multilateral international organizations do the restructuring is not acceptable.

The Prime Minister in a recent speech talked about playing a bigger leadership role on the international scene, but what we have seen is completely the opposite. It was with great interest yesterday when we heard in the House the member for Toronto—Danforth

criticize companies for working in Libya. The companies the hon. member criticized will be instrumental in rebuilding Libya.

We need to work with Libya to help with reconstruction. There will be a benefit for our companies as we get the oil industry back and get everything to work well in that area. We saw the situation in Egypt where there was insufficient international support after the regime change left Egypt in a vulnerable state.

We cannot let this happen in the Middle East. We especially cannot let it happen in Libya. I ask the House to vote for the subamendment by the member for Toronto Centre.

• (1115)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my friend for winning his election and returning as the CIDA critic. I worked with him when he was the parliamentary secretary for international trade.

I am a little confused. In his speech he talked about post-Gadhafi. At the current time, he is talking about the UN resolution and saving civilian lives. However, that will not happen until Mr. Gadhafi is gone.

The member has already jumped ahead to a post-Gadhafi situation. He stated that we should learn lessons from Afghanistan and other situations. Of course we should. We helped it build its democracy but we are working with governments that have been elected by the people. They are working to build their government. The government there has legitimacy.

In Libya, however, at the current time its government is under investigation by the International Criminal Court. Therefore, how can he say that we have learned from Afghanistan and that we should move into Libya right away?

Hon. Mark Eyking: Madam Speaker, I am glad the member opposite is satisfied that I was re-elected, but I am sure a lot of other Conservatives are not. However, I am glad to be working with the member opposite again on the foreign affairs file, but we have to look at the future. What are we going to be doing in that country?

Right now we are concentrating on military action and that has to be dealt with. We have to get Gadhafi out of there, but we have to look at the future.

As was mentioned earlier in the House, are the funds there? Are we just going to rely on the multilateral groups to go forward with this, or are we going to put funds to help in the reconstruction? Companies in Canada will want to know if money will be available to make that happen as they go forward.

We need to look forward. I know the Conservatives go day by day, but we have to look month by month, and I hope the hon. member will recognize that.

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech and I, too, want to welcome him back to the House and congratulate him on his appointment as critic. However, I would like to clarify something for he and his party.

It was very clear that the question from my leader yesterday was about the fact that Canada was part of the equation in terms of supporting Mr. Gadhafi and that we had Canadian companies involved, in some cases, in building prisons. God knows what would happen to those prisons under the Gadhafi regime. The point is, from this day forward, should we not be seized with that to understand and learn that we do not want to do business with regimes that oppress their people like the Gadhafi regime?

This is not about the spoils of war. This is not about ensuring Canadian companies get in there and get a deal. It should be about human rights and democratic development.

I would love to know what the member thinks about that.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Madam Speaker, the reality is this. We can look at China and many other countries around the world where Canada plays a big role in reconstruction and infrastructure. Lavalin is doing work in Libya to help with clean drinking water, irrigation and issues that would bring prosperity up and help the people in the region. It is not there supporting a regime. It is not supplying weapons to the regime. It is there to help with infrastructure for a country that needs it.

I know the NDP looks at this one way, but we have to see the big picture. We have to look at how reconstruction happens. There must be reconstruction and institutions in place to help the country move forward.

Some may say that we should not be in China because a communist party is running the country. However, we have to be there and our country can do the job. Not only that, but when other countries do that reconstruction, they also introduce democracy to the people in the area working for them on these projects.

The NDP has to think outside the box and see the benefits of Canadian companies working in these countries.

• (1120)

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to spend some time in this debate. I want to express my appreciation to the member from Sydney—Victoria for sharing his time. When we become a Gideon's army, we have to share more, and we are happy to do so.

The member from Ottawa Centre and the minister have outlined some of the history of the conflict. I simply want to say a couple of things in addition to the comments that have been made by my friend from Sydney—Victoria.

First, we should not make the mistake of believing that military intervention on its own represents a diplomatic and comprehensive solution to the challenges that we face in the world. It is very important for Canadians to have the understanding that while Canada deeply appreciates and respects the work that our military is doing in Afghanistan and in Libya, as it has done in many other

conflicts, the resolution of these conflicts requires more than simply a military effort. This is the first principle that we need to observe.

There are many times when it becomes a little easy to think that if we send planes over and drop some bombs, we are doing our bit for the mission. However, I was pleased to hear the minister today reflect on the fact that Canada's role needed to expand well beyond that.

Also, for my colleague from Ottawa Centre, we are fully supportive of the amendments he has proposed. I hope very much that those amendments will be satisfactory to the government.

[*Translation*]

We need to understand what is happening. We live in an unstable world where democracy does not exist for everyone and where human rights are not respected. In certain areas of the world, people live in terribly difficult economic conditions and an unstable political climate where repressive governments do not respect human rights. That is the world we live in.

As the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria said, we could rhyme off examples of significant progress that has been made. We have seen much positive change in Eastern Europe and Latin America over the past 50 years. There are still major challenges in Africa, the Middle East and China in particular. China is not currently a democracy, but it is a country of more than one billion people.

[*English*]

The question becomes, what is this standard? How do we deal with the fact that the world is not fully democratic, that the world is not one that fully respects human rights? Do we simply take the case of national sovereignty and say that we can never intervene in the affairs of another country, or do we understand, which I think we have to do, that the entire evolution of international law has taken us to this point where we have to say that what goes on inside a country is just as important as what happens between countries. The question is not so much any more what are the rights of the state, vis-a-vis other states. The question much more is whether the rights of citizens in countries, who are being mistreated by their government, are important.

This afternoon, and I am sure the minister will be there, we will be commemorating the Holocaust. We will be reflecting on the fact that the world turned away from those who were being viciously discriminated against in Germany. We waited for a long time and then the interventions came in Poland. Then the interventions came in Russia and then in all of eastern Europe, and six million people were killed because they were Jews.

After the second world war, we began to realize that we had to develop some sense of the rights of the world community and the rights that people had as a result of the injustices that were being faced.

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That is the way we have to understand what is happening in Libya. People ask me, “Why Libya? Why not Syria?” How do we explain this intervention and not that one? The answers are not always simple and, in fact, the answers are not always clear, but we are, slowly but surely as a world, taking the human footsteps toward the point where we can say that we will not allow people to be brutalized by their own government, that we will not simply sit back and do nothing and that we will intervene. Yes, that intervention may have a military component and people will be killed as a result of that intervention, and none of us should take joy in the fact that it is a consequence of what happened.

However, we also understand, from everything we have learned in human history, the consequences of appeasement, of not facing up to dictators, of letting people get away with impunity with killing their own people.

I would like to move an amendment to the amendment proposed by my colleague from Ottawa Centre. I move:

That the amendment be further amended by inserting after the words “political transition”, the following:

That the Government of Canada engage with the Libyan National Council (LNC) based in Benghazi as a legitimate political entity and representative of the Libyan people; that it provide the LNC with advice and assistance in governance, including women's rights;

And further by inserting after the words “alleged crimes”, the following:

That it ensure that Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, or visitors to Canada are not subject to any threats or intimidation by representatives of the Gadhafi regime.

I would add that I fully support the amendments proposed by the New Democratic Party. We had additional language, but we did not want to be redundant in simply putting forward the same perspective. I hope these proposals will have the support of the government. They are entirely consistent with the comments which the minister made today, and I hope they will be accepted.

• (1125)

The Deputy Speaker: The subamendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

• (1130)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the leader of the Liberal Party for his intervention and I would like to congratulate him on his return to the House, formally, and of course on his position.

There were a number of things he said in his speech that are important to note around the whole trajectory of what it means to ensure that the rights of civilians are protected. I want to underline the point that he made because there has been a lot of debate around why Libya and why not Syria.

I would ask my colleague, in terms of Syria, if he would please comment on how it is consistent to ensure that we have a diplomatic solution to support the people of Libya at a time when we are still having to deal with Syria. Some would say that there should not be a continuation of our support in Libya because there is a need for support in Syria.

I would simply ask him to comment on that and perhaps on what we could do in the case of the situation in Syria that has—

The Deputy Speaker: I must give the hon. member for Toronto Centre equal time to respond.

Hon. Bob Rae: Madam Speaker, I wish I had a magic answer.

I remember asking questions slightly higher up in the food chain over there about Sri Lanka as to why we were not intervening in Sri Lanka. I remember many government ministers saying, “What do you want us to do? Send in troops?”

The Secretary-General of the UN has now commissioned a panel to look into the possibility of war crimes in Sri Lanka.

In the case of Syria, it is a deep and genuine tragedy that is taking place. Thousands of people have been killed. Yet, the world community has not been able to rouse itself to deal effectively with the crisis. We have carried out some sanctions, we have carried out some efforts to restrict the activities of the al-Assad government, but we have not been able to find an effective solution.

There are many countries at the UN, two in particular on the Security Council, that do not want an intervention because they do not want the eyes of the world to be focusing on them, and they both have vetoes. They have taken a very, I regard, reactionary position with respect to the obligations of the community to intervene when there are such clear examples of abuse of a population.

I think we have to—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is more a comment. I want to thank the leader of the Liberal Party for his speech and intervention on this issue. I appreciate his wise counsel.

There is no doubt that military action will not solve the problem alone. However, the problem will also not be solved without military action. I want to say to him and to my friend from Ottawa Centre that I think Canadians should be very pleased that all members of this place have approached this issue with the best interests of Canadian values in mind. It has not been a partisan one; it has been collaborative. It is a good day for this Parliament. So, I just wanted to congratulate the leader of the Liberal Party for his speech.

Hon. Bob Rae: Madam Speaker, I am almost overcome by the good feeling, but I am aware that it will never last, and I am fully aware of what else might follow.

I hope the government will understand that respect is a two-way street. If there is greater transparency in operations and a willingness to discuss issues and to go through them on a systemic basis, then the better off we are all going to be. There is always a great deal of goodwill on this side. Our caucus looks forward to discussions on policies that are based on this approach. The more we can do it this way, the better off we are all going to be.

I want to express my appreciation to my friend the Minister of National Defence, who accommodated us by giving us some briefings and giving us further information. I deeply appreciate it.

The more we can get on like this, the better off we will be. Question period is coming at 2 o'clock, so we will see how long it lasts.

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•(1135)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think we have seen a high-water mark. Early days albeit in this Parliament, but the great traditions of this place include taking part in thoughtful and inclusive debate on subjects such as this.

I am pleased to participate as well in the debate regarding Canada's mission in Libya. The motion itself is clear. We are seeking an extension. There will be a vote.

Libyans themselves, most importantly, have been adamantly opposed to Gadhafi's autocratic regime and they took to the streets. Exasperated by the denial of their basic human rights, the endemic corruption in their country, and the concentration of Libya's wealth in the hands of few, in the hands of the repressive regime and its associates, they demanded that their voices be heard. Democracy has sprung in the Arab spring. Libyans have asked for a say in the affairs of their own nation, something we as Canadians believe is a basic right and a fundamental element of any good government.

The peaceful protests were met with brutal repression, devastating air and ground attacks, behaviour that is absolutely contradictory to Canadian and universal values of human rights and freedom of democracy. These fundamental pillars are truly fundamental to any functional society and they have been absent under Gadhafi.

It soon became evident in Libya that unless the international community assisted the people, further atrocities and massacres would follow. Let there be no doubt, we have already saved innumerable lives. The maniacal ravings of a lunatic made it very clear what the intentions were.

The international community did not stand idly by. I would suggest it moved with unprecedented speed and collaboration. The Arab League, for example, called for an intervention to protect the civilian population of Libya. The United Nations Security Council quickly recognized the deteriorating situation and it passed resolution 1970 on September 26 and resolution 1973 on March 17, calling for the protection of the Libyan population, including an arms embargo and the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya.

Canada and our allies in NATO and partners in the Arab world, including Qatar, the UAE and Jordan, answered the call and proceeded to enforce resolution 1973.

We launched Operation Mobile on February 25 and pre-deployed to Malta. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the participation and support that was provided to us by the people of Malta.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Forces are playing a key role in Canada's response to the crisis in Libya, and we can all be proud of the leadership that our country has been showing since this crisis began. We quickly contributed to the efforts of the international community to stabilize the troubling situation in Libya and to protect its people.

Members of our armed forces were first deployed to Libya to help evacuate Canadians. Two C-17 Globemaster aircraft, two C-130J Hercules aircraft and approximately 80 soldiers were deployed to Malta, making it possible for hundreds of Canadians and others to leave the country safely.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, I should have indicated at the outset that will be splitting my time with the member for Newmarket—Aurora.

After the passing of resolution 1973, Canada again acted quickly and decisively in support of the UN Security Council's decision. On March 18, we announced a deployment of fighter aircraft to assist international efforts to enforce the United Nations resolution. Three days later, the government was extremely pleased to garner unanimous support here in the House for the parameters of Canada's military deployment.

When NATO took command of all operations on March 31, the Canadian Forces were already well engaged in the international mission. We leaned forward, and ask we speak, six CF-18 fighter aircraft and one spare, along with one CC-150 Polaris air refueller, two CC-130 Hercules tankers and two Aurora maritime patrol aircraft, as well as the HMCS *Charlottetown* with an embarked Sea King helicopter are all participating, along with and most importantly the support personnel in theatre. That is roughly 650 Canadian Forces men and women in uniform.

With a navy frigate and several air force assets in action, Canada has been at the very forefront, at the point of the spear in the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector, aptly named I might say.

Under the very capable command of a Canadian general, Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, who is heading up the overall NATO mission, we can safely say in this place and throughout the country that we are all very proud of the leadership being demonstrated by Lieutenant General Bouchard and all of the men and women who are participating with our allies.

The Canadian Forces operations, whether air patrols or strikes, aerial surveillance or refuelling, maritime patrols or interdiction are critical and are having the desired effect. Along with the contributions of our allies and partners, they have significantly and steadily brought about progress.

The NATO-led international mission is fulfilling its mandate, consistent with the UN resolutions. It has saved the lives of civilians, as I mentioned earlier, and has considerably reduced the ability of Gadhafi's regime and its forces to plan and conduct attacks against the opposition and the civilian population.

It is weakening the infrastructure that supports the Gadhafi regime. We have seen high-level political and military defections in recent weeks, and the support for Gadhafi is weakening. The opposition is holding ground with increasing capacity to counter Gadhafi's attacks.

•(1140)

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, some of the conditions that led the international community and Canada to intervene still exist. The situation has improved in certain areas of Libya; however, acts of violence are still being committed.

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Forces loyal to the Gadhafi regime continue to terrorize the people of Libya. Libyans are still suffering and are still in need of protection. Moreover, considerable restrictions are preventing aid workers from providing care and delivering urgently needed items.

Aid workers are often unable to reach the people who are most affected by the violence: the disadvantaged, the injured and those in need of immediate assistance.

[*English*]

As the Prime Minister stated a few weeks ago, Gadhafi and the Libyan government are clearly failing to fulfill their responsibilities to protect the Libyan population. Not only have they lost all legitimacy but they are also an obvious danger, and continue to be, to their own people. Two weeks ago, the UN Human Rights Council accused Gadhafi's regime of committing not just war crimes but crimes against humanity, when it carried out systemic attacks against the Libyan population over the past few weeks. He has been indicted.

Clearly, pressure must be maintained on the Gadhafi regime to ensure that civilians are protected against further attacks, and strikes on his command and control posts must and will continue.

To address a specific suggestion by some critics, withdrawing Canadian Forces from the NATO-led mission at this point would clearly send a wrong signal. More importantly, it would have dire consequences for the citizens of Libya, given the important role we are shouldering. It would be contrary to the core Canadian values of freedom, democracy and human rights, and it would not conform with our commitment as a country to the international community and would undermine the credibility of the alliance.

On June 1, NATO members announced that the alliance mission, Operation Unified Protector, would be extended for a period of 90 days, which is the subject of this debate. The decision sends a clear message to the Gadhafi regime that NATO partners and allies are determined to continue its operations to protect the Libyan people, to sustain its efforts to protect the United Nations, to fulfill the United Nations mandate and to keep up the pressure to see it through. Alliance members and partners alike expressed firm resolve to continue the mission and work together to bring about success.

Maintaining the Canadian Forces' contribution to these operations is the responsible thing to do. It supports the international community's effort to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis and continues to demonstrate Canadian leadership and our commitment to NATO as a credible partner and ally. We need to continue our commitment to Libya until the terms of the UN Security Council resolution are met.

Just to remind all members of what those three existing goals are, they are: to ensure that all threats and attacks against civilians have ended; to make sure Gadhafi's regime and military and paramilitary forces have verifiably withdrawn to their bases; and that immediate full and safe unhindered access to humanitarian relief to civilians is guaranteed.

I conclude by remarks referring to the inscription on the cabinet wall, which says, "Love justice, you that are the rulers of the earth". This is the wisdom of Solomon. I suggest that we take that advice. It

is the responsible, compassionate and right thing to do for our country and the people of Libya.

• (1145)

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Madam Speaker, Libya is a country of different tribes. It is deeply divided along tribal and geographic lines. There must be a major push for peace building after the bombing, the fighting and the civil war. Peace building is the tough work of developing the physical, social, political and security infrastructure for sustainable peace. It is the societal integration after a civil war and it is critically important.

Does the government have a peace-building plan now? If it does not, does it plan to build or develop one?

Hon. Peter MacKay: Madam Speaker, we are pleased that today the Minister of International Cooperation has announced further aid, something that I know that she and members of the official opposition fully support.

With respect to the broader question about a plan, clearly much of that responsibility falls to the entire international community, Canada included. Those discussions are being held at the highest levels of the United Nations. There was a communiqué sent from NATO, the secretary general with the unanimous support of all 28 NATO alliance countries, urging the United Nations very much in this same direction.

So while the situation will be a complicated, multi-faceted and one that will certainly remain a challenge in a post-Gadhafi world, Canada is very much in support of and ready to participate in what that plan will be. It will require resources and a great deal of effort, but most importantly it will require the leadership and support of the people of Libya in that direction.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the minister did an admirable job of canvassing the history of our involvement in this mission and bringing us up to date.

The real question of this debate, going forward, is what now? I am sure that the hon. minister would agree with me that bombing is not a strategy. It may well be a means to an end, but it is not a strategy.

NATO is not an entity that is well positioned to forge a political consensus to create democratic institutions. That may be part of it, but it is not its primary focus as an alliance. The question I have of the minister is whether it is appropriate to consider a pause in the bombing in order to facilitate some consensus or developments or discussions among the Libyan people

Hon. Peter MacKay: The short answer, Madam Speaker, is that I do not believe it is, given the simple reason that we have seen at various times, intermittently in the last number of weeks, the ability and resolve of Gadhafi, the regime and those forces still under his command to cause serious damage in attacks throughout the country.

Given that, I would also take issue with the characterization of there not being a strategic effect behind the bombing. There has in fact been a very precise effort, first and foremost, to avoid civilian casualties and to ensure that we are hitting targets to incapacitate Gadhafi and his regime's ability to conduct those attacks on civilians.

They have within their armaments the ability to cause serious casualties. They have significant armaments at their disposal, and so that has very much been part of the strategy by Canada and NATO allies.

However, back to the earlier question by the official opposition, this all has to be done in concert with the United Nations. It has to be done very much with an information pipeline, if you will, to the best of our ability, with the Libyan people to ensure that we are making plans and that this is not done in any random or ad hoc way. I would suggest there have been talks at the highest levels to ensure that we do have a strategy going forward that will allow us to move quickly from military intervention to humanitarian and political progress.

• (1150)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada is greatly concerned by the crisis in Libya and the plight of the hundreds of thousands of people trapped inside Libya or forced to flee to neighbouring Egypt, Tunisia and other border countries.

The situation on the ground in Libya is extremely volatile and its citizens, who are caught in the middle, are in urgent need of food, water, sanitation, protection and medical supplies. I note that although the food situation is stable for now, estimates are that food stocks will only last another four to five weeks with no way of procuring new supplies at present.

Some progress has been made. On May 30, a ship chartered by the International Organization for Migration evacuated stranded migrants and war wounded, and delivered food from the World Food Programme as well as medical supplies. Since mid-April the IOM has delivered 2,600 tonnes of humanitarian assistance and rescued 7,000 migrants and war wounded.

Canada was among the first to respond, and we continue to work with experienced partners to support the most pressing needs of the people affected by the violence.

However, the Libyan Red Crescent, which is providing a unique and incredibly valuable service on the ground, is stretched to capacity. Today the Hon. Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, announced \$2 million in additional humanitarian assistance to help civilians in Libya.

This most recent announcement will assist the International Committee of the Red Cross, together with the Red Crescent societies of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt to continue efforts to deliver aid to conflict-affected people there. It will also assist the United Nations population fund to protect women and girls from sexual assault, including rape, and provide critical care to these survivors in Libya. The UNFPA aims to assist up to 50,000 women and girls in Libya who are victims of sexual violence.

Of the \$2 million in new funding, the Canadian International Development Agency is providing \$1.75 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross and \$250,000 to the UNFPA, building on Canada's earlier action, which I will outline in a moment.

Overall, Canada has now provided \$10.6 million in humanitarian assistance to assist people affected by the crisis. Canada is helping through the Red Cross movement, the International Organization for

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Migration, the World Food Programme and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, among others.

I remind members that on February 16, a popular uprising began against the four-decade long rule of Moammar Gadhafi. The reaction of the Gadhafi regime was swift and extremely brutal, including military operations against civilians. The conflict between forces for and against the government has since plunged the country into chaos.

The crisis has resulted in the exodus of a large number of people fleeing the violence to surrounding countries. As of the middle of May, over 790,000 people have fled Libya, more than a third of them migrant workers. The United Nations estimates that approximately 1.5 million people are affected. Many migrant workers are stranded at the borders, waiting to be repatriated to their countries of origin.

The international community has since been working to repatriate them back to their countries of origin: Egypt, Tunisia, Niger, Chad, Algeria and Sudan. At the same time, hundreds of thousands more people are still trapped inside Libya.

Canada calls on all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and to allow humanitarian workers full, safe and unhindered access to people in need. Canada is especially concerned about recent allegations that sexual violence, including rape, is being used against the civilian population, not just by Libyan government forces but possibly also by armed opposition forces.

• (1155)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs has stated that the most urgent priority right now is for a humanitarian pause in hostilities in the Nafusa mountainous region where it will assess needs and secure the delivery of food and medical supplies.

UN OCHA will also help to evacuate the wounded and third country nationals still in the area. An appeal was issued by the United Nations on April 1. By mid-May, nearly 53% of the international response had been received.

Of CIDA's \$8 million earlier contribution, \$6,325,000 was in response to the United Nations regional flash appeal and \$1,675,000 was provided to the International Red Cross. Let me give a more detailed breakdown.

The International Organization for Migration has received \$3,575,000 to support repatriation efforts for migrants displaced by the fighting in Libya and repatriated 144,890 third country nationals. As well, \$1,350,000 has gone to the International Committee of the Red Cross to meet emergency medical needs inside Libya and to support Red Cross relief efforts in Tunisia and Egypt, which has reached 780,000 people, including internally displaced people and their host families.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has received \$250,000 to provide humanitarian relief, including food, non-food items, medical support to displaced migrants in Egypt and Tunisia. The revised appeal will help them to reach 200,000 people.

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A total of \$1.5 million in emergency food assistance has been provided to displaced and conflict-affected populations in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.

An additional \$1.25 million has been provided to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for shelter, non-food items, water and sanitation for displaced people in neighbouring countries.

Also, the Red Cross Society has received \$75,000 to transport humanitarian relief supplies from stockpiles in Dubai to Tunisia.

In addition, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has contributed \$630,000 for essential security equipment to enhance the safety of UN humanitarian personnel in this dangerous situation.

The UN Human Rights Council has established an international commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya, including allegations of sexual assault and rape. In addition, on February 26, allegations of rape and sexual violence were referred to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court through UN Security Council Resolution 1970 and action is being taken. The ICC is an independent, permanent court with jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of the most serious international crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Under the leadership of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN has also established a protection cluster. As the situation evolves, this working group will investigate and address all forms of sexual violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, domestic violence and harmful traditional practices. The group is working closely with non-governmental organizations inside Libya, Tunisia and the border with Libya.

In addition, the International Committee of the Red Cross, working on both sides of the front lines, also provides protection and medical services to women who have suffered sexual violence.

My fellow members, Canada is doing everything it can to monitor the situation in Libya, provide humanitarian support where needed through its partners, and orchestrate a whole of government response to the situation to ensure the safety of the civilian population.

•(1200)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the resolution was in the House on March 21 and now there is an additional motion before the House that has been amended by the NDP for a further three and a half month extension of our involvement in Libya.

I have heard a lot of concerns from constituents and from Canadians generally about the military aspect of this campaign. One important aspect would be to consider what the overall strategy is in terms of an exit strategy. I heard the minister of defence say quite clearly earlier that bombing in Libya is a strategy.

I would like to ask the member whether or not the government does have an exit strategy in terms of what is happening in the region as a whole? Obviously there are other areas where conflict is going on. Canada is now involved in this situation in Libya, but it is important that there be a response in terms of the exit strategy. This was a key question in our involvement in Afghanistan and it remains

so today. I would like to ask the member to respond in terms of the overall strategy as it applies particularly to an exit strategy.

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, the exit strategy is going to be an ongoing discussion.

We are debating today the motion to extend our mission in Libya by three months. What we are discussing today from the perspective of international co-operation and international development is the urgent need for humanitarian support and humanitarian endeavours there.

We are focused right now on the urgent humanitarian needs. Once the situation is stabilized, we will continue to discuss what the exit strategy will be.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I note with some concern the member opposite's remark that in some places in the country the food supply is only four or five weeks as compared to the three and a half month extension of our military mission that we are discussing today, the difference between those two being a couple of months.

I would like to ask the hon. member opposite how much of the \$2 million in humanitarian aid will be applied to addressing the food situation? Does the hon. member expect that perhaps in the future we might have to increase this amount?

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer the member to the news release that was put out this morning by the minister wherein we talk about the new \$2 million that is going to go into this endeavour. It talks about providing emergency assistance for up to 780,000 affected people in Libya as well as those who have fled into neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt. This assistance will include food and non-food items, water, sanitation and primary health care.

We are also going to provide \$200,000 toward assisting women and girls who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, sexual violence.

•(1205)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation relates to what I see as a level of inconsistency in her government's policies.

I, too am very troubled by the use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war.

The Conservative government is the same government that turned a deaf ear three times to requests from the United Nations for two peacekeepers from Canada to go to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would ask for my colleague's response.

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member to the House.

The debate today is about Libya. We are focusing on what we are doing in Libya.

Today the Minister of International Cooperation announced that we are putting forward another \$2 million. A tremendous amount of that is going to go into working with women who have been victims of sexual violence. That money is certainly going to help the women and the girls who are in Libya.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in the House today to speak about this very important issue. UN resolution 1973 is a good example of what is referred to as the responsibility to protect doctrine. It is an approach or concept that is particularly dear to my heart since I was able to help promote it in a former life.

Since this resolution clearly reflects a consensus in the United Nations Security Council and clearly reflects this new citizen protection philosophy, it is important to strictly adhere to its terms. From military and other perspectives, I believe we all agree that, as the resolution states, the main goal is protecting civilians rather than trying to change the regime or meet any other objective.

I will not really get into the issue of the military because there are many other aspects that are equally important. I am thinking, for example, of those aspects that are more diplomatic in nature. It is important that Canada, all the other countries involved and NATO work with intermediaries who are currently on the ground and are trying to establish a dialogue, as well as with the United Nations Secretary-General's special envoy, Abdel-Elah Mohamed Al-Khatib.

We hope that all conflicts eventually end through diplomatic negotiations. We need to work towards that goal immediately and prepare for the future. It is also time to think about peace operations after the conflict and about ways to support the people of Libya to resolve the situation and find more peaceful solutions to the existing conflicts.

Another very important aspect of all this is the question of human rights. UN Security Council resolution 1970 has already referred the Libyan situation to the International Criminal Court and investigations are under way. In fact, a Canadian, Philippe Kirsch, is one of three jurists responsible for investigating human rights violations in Libya. Allegations of systematic rape, the use of rape as a weapon of war, are one of the specific aspects that must be examined. This situation is unacceptable and, if it turns out to be true, the guilty parties must be tried before the International Criminal Court. Similarly, anyone else responsible for serious crimes against humanity must be brought before the International Criminal Court.

•(1210)

Last but not least, the humanitarian situation in Libya is a real concern. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people have been killed during the four months of conflict in that country. That is a huge number and it is completely unacceptable. Also, about half a million people have left the country since the crisis began and another 330,000 have been internally displaced. The UN also estimates that at least 1,000 people—mainly men—have been kidnapped or have disappeared from Misrata since the conflict began in February.

Right now thousands of people on both sides of the border are afraid they will not have enough food, medicine and other basic

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necessities. However, the crisis extends beyond Libya's borders. Many people have been internationally displaced, particularly to Tunisia. Among those people are many migrant workers who cannot return to their homes.

According to the United Nations, in the worst-case scenario, as many as 3.6 million people in Libya could be affected by a humanitarian crisis. Problems exist not only in Libya and in neighbouring countries, but here as well. Libyans here are running into problems. Libyan students in particular are no longer receiving funding and their visas might expire as they no longer have the means to support themselves. We have to think about those people as well.

A lot more needs to be done on a humanitarian level. So far what we have given in humanitarian aid is a little more than a third of what we have spent on the military effort.

[*English*]

I welcome the announcement from my hon. colleague that \$2 million more has been credited to this effort today.

[*Translation*]

However, we must continue in that vein. We are quite certain that as things progress on the ground, there will be growing needs. Of course money is needed, but so is a plan. Let us not forget to use the resources we have on the ground. We have seen the International Organization on Migration use boats to evacuate people and to deliver food and drugs. We also have resources on the ground that could be used in that way, when possible.

Finally, I would like to say that recognizing the national transitional council of Libya is certainly a step in the right direction that will allow us to have a dialogue to further our humanitarian efforts and determine what to do next.

•(1215)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her very helpful and constructive contribution to this debate. I have a question for her.

Given the extent of the humanitarian crisis, the number of victims, especially civilian victims, in the country, and the number of people displaced by the crisis, what measures does she think could be taken by the agencies and various United Nations bodies in Libya and in the region? In her very professional opinion, what multilateral measures will need to be taken to better address the various aspects of this humanitarian crisis in the months and years to come?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable colleague for his question.

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I believe that it is an extremely important question. All humanitarian aid must be coordinated. Let us be frank, we have seen the waste that can occur when aid is not closely coordinated. It is not a question of each country doing its own thing, doing what it believes is right. We must have good assessments on the ground, and the group must be coordinated, primarily through certain UN agencies and the various stages of coordination that already exist. We know that all our international co-operation organizations have coordination offices. Within the United Nations, I am thinking mainly of the International Organization on Migration, which is already active on the ground, is very familiar with the issues and the needs, and to date has been a leader within the World Food Programme and other similar organizations. However, we must bring everyone to the table for a discussion.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member on her remarkable speech, in which she mentioned that she had some experience. She has been very modest about her considerable decades of experience as a worker in the diplomatic and foreign services of our country. We are very grateful she has brought that experience, knowledge and judgment to the House of Commons and to our caucus. She has been very modest about it, but we certainly appreciate her knowledge, experience and ability to advise us on these extremely complex matters.

Would she comment on the huge number of refugees who have streamed across the border to Tunisia? Many of them are not Libyans or Tunisians. They are there because they are displaced workers who did not have a chance to get out. Has she received any indication at all that the government is attempting to take this issue seriously and trying to do something, or is it necessary for us to continue the pressure?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words.

It is an extremely worrisome situation. Most of them are migrant workers. They are often ignored and forgotten, and now happen to be at the border. These workers generally come from countries that do not have the resources to repatriate them. They find themselves in an unstable situation, as though they were practically stateless. We know that much has been done for them, in Tunisia in particular. We must applaud the efforts of the Tunisian government to accept and shelter these people.

● (1220)

[*English*]

There is beginning to be a strain even on the Tunisian government. That is why it is more of a global issue. We should also be talking with the Tunisian government to see what kind of help and support it needs to help the people. It has been doing its share and we should be doing our share, too.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to tell the member for Laurier-Sainte-Marie that I very much appreciated her speech. Her presence in the House will certainly be a great help to our country. I have three specific questions for her.

First, the NDP says that our job is not regime change—we agree that it is not the job of the military on the ground—but as soon as we support the transitional council as the legitimate government, we are calling for a regime change. That is certainly not the point of view of the current regime. So we must recognize that.

Second, Canada is already present on the ground, for example, with SNC-Lavalin. Is this not an excellent advantage for us as we help the Libyans rebuild their country?

Third, there is the fact that we cannot intervene everywhere, in Syria, for instance. For the time being, we are not looking at sending our military into Syria. Is that an excuse to not intervene anywhere? If we want to be perfectly consistent, we would either intervene everywhere or nowhere at all. But the results would be very detrimental to Canada's role in the world. I would think that we should intervene wherever we can do so successfully.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments and encouragement. I will give a very brief response.

The Libyan national transitional council truly should be recognized as a legitimate entity with which we can enter into discussions and establish a dialogue. I am talking about a legitimate entity with which we can establish a dialogue, and that dialogue is absolutely essential. If we want to provide humanitarian aid and work on the ground, we must be able to have discussions with this organization.

As for the reconstruction, I believe that at this stage, in June 2011, we probably have to wait in order to be able to identify reconstruction needs and determine which organizations would be best suited to directing and supporting the Libyans in the reconstruction. After all, it will be up to the Libyans themselves.

I think there is a key element to the final question, concerning the impossibility of being involved everywhere. The key element in the responsibility to protect doctrine is the UN Security Council. Once the UN Security Council approves taking action, I believe that Canada, ideally, should be part of that action. It is our authorization to take action. Without the Security Council's approval, it is much more difficult and cannot be considered part of the responsibility to protect.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on being elected Speaker. I also wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary East, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is doing a remarkable job.

I am very honoured to participate in this important debate today. I am able to do so because I was re-elected by the people of Lévis, Bellechasse and Les Etchemins on May 2. I would first like to thank them for their continued support.

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I would also like to thank all the volunteers who worked on the election campaign and my office staff, my team, who, for more than five years, have worked on behalf of the people of Lévis—Bellechasse and Les Etchemins. I would like to say that we are here for all the people in my riding, to meet their needs and give them the straight goods, to the best of our knowledge.

Naturally, I would like to thank the members of my family: my parents, Monique and Irvin, an accordion player whom many people know; my children, who are becoming increasingly involved in this adventure, sometimes in spite of themselves; and my wife Marie, who is always by my side. If we are in this place, it is because we have people who make it possible for us to perform this wonderful duty, and I am very grateful to them. I would also like to thank my in-laws, Louise and Jacques, who will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

We live today in such a great country because we stand up for the values of freedom as well as for the women and children who live here and elsewhere. I want to take part in this debate today in order to maintain peace here and abroad.

As has been said in many speeches today, the humanitarian situation in Libya remains very precarious and, unfortunately, continues to deteriorate. There is a serious crisis in terms of the protection of civilians, and our main concern remains the fate of people trapped in areas where there is fighting, including Tripoli, Misrata and the mountainous region in the western part of the country.

Damages to infrastructure and shortages of money and gas will likely have significant repercussions on the population over the weeks and months to come, particularly on the most vulnerable. That is why Canada remains committed to the mission in Libya and is determined to ensure that Libyans' most basic humanitarian needs are met.

The UN assessment mission in Misrata found that infrastructure in the downtown core had been generally destroyed. What is even more worrisome are the deficiencies when it comes to protection, particularly the protection of women and children, that the mission also found. We are extremely worried about the allegations of sexual violence used by military forces as a weapon against civilians. We have called for a thorough investigation into the situation so that the aggressors can be brought to justice for these deplorable acts.

Furthermore, the use of anti-personnel mines by Gadhafi's forces and the negative impact they are having on the ability of humanitarian organizations to carry out their activities is completely unacceptable. We are especially concerned about the situation in the mountainous region in western Libya. We have emphatically told the Libyan government of the importance of providing civilians with basic necessities and we have urged that country's government to ensure that humanitarian organizations have unrestricted and safe access.

To date, Canada has responded to international appeals for humanitarian aid by giving some \$8.6 million to its partners in the region. The full amount of this contribution was allocated and spent and it provided the people of Libya with much needed water, essential items, food, shelter and emergency medical care.

In conjunction with the Canadian International Development Agency, we are working with several partners, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Department of Security and Safety. Canada has also taken a leading role in ensuring that the humanitarian situation in Libya steadily improves; however, there is still much work to be done.

On June 9, it was estimated that over 660,000 people had left Libya and not returned and that 135,000 people had been internally displaced.

•(1225)

Canada continues to raise serious concerns about the measures taken by the Gadhafi regime, which have led Libyans and migrants to leave the country to go to Egypt, Tunisia and other neighbouring countries. As well, we have publicly exhorted the Gadhafi regime and the anti-Gadhafi forces to protect civilians.

The Gadhafi regime chose to wage a war on its own people. In so doing, it violated international law. In light of this blatant disregard for human rights and international law, Canada was among the first to demand that the regime immediately cease the attacks on its own people and guarantee that the perpetrators of these deplorable crimes would be brought to justice.

Our country, Canada, was one of the first to ask the UN Security Council to bring the situation before the International Criminal Court, and we have strongly supported the creation of an international commission of inquiry into the human rights violations. The preliminary results of this inquiry have confirmed the severity of the crimes committed. The prosecutor at the International Criminal Court has asked that warrants be issued for the arrest of Moammar Gadhafi, his son, Saif al-Islam Gadhafi, and his brother-in-law, Abdullah Senussi.

The prosecutor alleged that these three people planned and ordered crimes against humanity and organized widespread, systematic attacks against civilian populations, including murder, torture and persecution. The international community cannot and will not tolerate this situation. The international commission of inquiry conducted an investigation and found that crimes against humanity and war crimes had been committed by Libyan government forces. What is more, the commission says there are indications that these crimes are part of a strategy devised by Colonel Gadhafi and his inner circle.

Canada is extremely alarmed by the allegations, which are currently under investigation by these two bodies, that the Libyan regime systematically uses rape and sexual violence as an instrument to repress its population. When used as a weapon of war, rape is a war crime and a contemptible act. When used to systematically attack, repress and terrorize people, rape can also be a crime against humanity. These are heinous acts of sexual violence perpetrated to advance the military objectives of a regime. We unreservedly condemn these acts and express our most sincere sympathy to the victims.

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These reprehensible acts are the reason for Canada's involvement in the NATO mission. War crimes and crimes against humanity are serious crimes that threaten world peace, security and well-being. The scope, extent and brutality of these acts make them international crimes, an international concern that calls for an international response. The international community must demonstrate a collective determination and continue to guarantee accountability and protection for the people of Libya.

Canada supports the investigations by the commission of inquiry and the International Criminal Court. The perpetrators of these crimes have to face justice, and these crimes must never be committed again. Let the people in Libya who continue to order these heinous crimes be warned that the world is watching and they will not escape justice.

Canada will ensure that those who seek to remain in power in Libya by committing these crimes against their people are arrested and held accountable for their actions. Canada's role in Libya must continue for the reasons I just mentioned. Colonel Gadhafi must leave. The Libyan people must be liberated and protected.

• (1230)

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member touched on a number of things that are worthy of underlining. He mentioned the fact that we need to take seriously the issue of rape as a weapon of war. He will know that our party has pushed the government to recognize that and we welcome the announcement that it will be supporting action on that. It is important to note.

The member also mentioned that this was something that we needed to be seized with. This is not about some far-off place by someone with whom we had no contact.

We know there were revenues realized to the Gadhafi regime because of our trade and recognition of it. In light of the fact that Canada was doing significant trade with the Gadhafi regime, would he not also believe that is yet another reason that we need to be involved in protecting citizens there simply because of our involvement in trade and our recognition of the Gadhafi regime for many years?

• (1235)

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

He raised an interesting point. As soon as our government, our country, is informed that rights are being violated, rights as fundamental as an attack on the integrity of the men and women of this country or other countries, it is important to take action. That is what we have done. As I mentioned, as soon as we were informed of the allegations, the government took action and immediately denounced rape and sexual violence as weapons of repression against the people of Libya. That is why we are calling on the organizations we have created, such as the International Criminal Court, to take action and ensure that this no longer happens in Libya or anywhere in the world.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his comments, the member indicated, without any hesitation, that Colonel Gadhafi must leave. Do the current mission objectives include the removal of Colonel Gadhafi from power? Is the government crystal clear on that particular point?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat to the member that it is important for our government to ensure that the primary role of a government is to protect its citizens. In the case before us today, it is clear that the complete opposite is happening. That is why Canada will ensure that those who try to remain in power in Libya by committing crimes against its citizens will be arrested and held accountable for their crimes. Canada must continue to be involved, and Colonel Gadhafi must leave so that the people of Libya are safe.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we are extending this mission of having the no-fly zone and of taking the assets that Colonel Gadhafi and his regime have because they have been using those assets against their own people.

The war crimes to which the minister has alluded are horrendous. The killing of thousands of people by Gadhafi and his supporters must be stopped. I know we are not here talking about a regime change but there are war crimes being committed. Now they are using rape as a weapon against their own people.

I would like the minister to elaborate more on why it is so important that we extend this mission. It is a NATO-led mission with a Canadian general in charge and it is sanctioned by the UN, the Arab League of Nations and, of course, the African Union.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons for Canada to stay on this mission. Crimes, such as rape, are being committed and we cannot tolerate that. We know government leaders are involved in that and we cannot tolerate that. Therefore, as a country, we must intervene. We want to keep peace and the way to do it is to preserve it elsewhere and to assume that the basic and fundamental rights of citizens are protected here and elsewhere.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, let me congratulate you on being elected as Chair.

Today, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and all my colleagues will continue speaking about the importance of the continuation of this military mission. I would like to make it very clear for the Liberal member, who asked whether we were committed to a regime change, that the military mission is not part of a regime change. The political dimensions require that Mr. Gadhafi go, but that does not mean we are looking for a military regime change. That is not the military objective.

Hopefully that answers the member's question. That is what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said this morning.

I have visited Libya. I went there a couple of years ago to attend the African Union Summit, hosted by Libya. Colonel Gadhafi hosted the conference. I saw him and I met his foreign minister.

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In no uncertain terms, the general consensus of Mr. Gadhafi was he was a man with a very high ego, with very eccentric ideas, living in his own dream world that he created and wanted others to follow him. In fact, at the African Union Summit, he antagonized everyone by having his own ideas of the direction he wanted to go even when others did not want to go that way. He has been in charge of the country for 40 years.

My colleague talked about the business dealings that Canada had with this individual. The world tolerated Gadhafi for 40 years. We are not in the business of regime change. Therefore, while Mr. Gadhafi was there, with his eccentric ideas, the world tolerated him.

He used his people's wealth for his own ideas, coming out with some weird ideas that could only be attributed to a very high ego. In fact, the man, who deposed a king by taking over power, called himself the king of kings, by the votes of tribal kings giving him this title. That is the type of individual who is in power.

When he was challenged, following the Arab revolution, some comments were made that Tunisia and Egypt were not similar to what happened in Libya. What has happened in Libya is the continuation of the Arab spring revolution that is now touching Yemen as well as Syria. It is the desire of the people to get rid of their eccentric leaders who have been in power for 40 years and who have done practically nothing with their wealth for their people. Therefore, the people are demanding legitimate change.

This fellow has come forward with a very brutal repression against his people. Everybody is talking about it. My friend talked about that. We have been told that he is even hiding his military assets from the civilian population and he is actually killing his own people. The ICC, of which we are very positive, will very shortly indict him for crimes against humanity, which he richly deserves.

It is of critical importance to note that the UN Security Council has finally said that enough is enough, that he cannot carry on like this. Today the Liberal leader talked about the Holocaust and the six billion people who lost their lives because not enough action was taken.

I am very happy to say that the Security Council, with the African Union leaders, all agree that they need to stop him from killing his people. That is the key element of the resolution. That is the key element of why Canada is over there. As the Prime Minister has said, we will make our mark felt on the world stage in the promotion of democracy and of rule of law, which is the cornerstone value of foreign policy of this government. That is extended to Libya.

● (1240)

We are there because we need to protect civilians and the only way we can protect them is to ensure that Gadhafi does not have the power and prevent his forces from continuing to kill his people. As we heard, he is now not only using his military assets, but using rape and everything else to suppress his people.

We must understand that this UN mission has two components to it. Today the Minister of Foreign Affairs made it very clear that there is a diplomatic initiative arising out of this, which is why today we have recognized the transitional authority in Libya to continue the dialogue process so we can continue to build that country. The institutions that Mr. Gadhafi built for 40 years were only to allow

him to stay in power and not for the benefit of his people. Therefore, it is important for us to help.

Today's support, through the NDP amendment, is that we agree to humanitarian assistance because his brutal regime has created a humanitarian crisis and we need to assist the people. We are working with our international partners to ensure we deal with that humanitarian crisis. However, the extension of the military mission is to ensure that peace and stability return to Libya and that the Libyan people are not harmed by that lunatic dictator who refuses to give up power.

We are putting political pressure on Mr. Gadhafi. When we talk about Mr. Gadhafi leaving, it would be in the interests of he and his son to do so because the writing is on the wall, as has been said many times. Once the ICC indicts both of them, they will have no place else to go. It is best for them right now, in the interests of their people, to go. This is the diplomatic pressure that Canada and the international community are applying and will continue to apply.

When we say Mr. Gadhafi has to go, we are not talking about a regime change. We are saying that the man has lost all moral authority to govern his country. He has been killing his own people and he is a man who is very soon going to be indicted by the ICC for crimes against humanity, which is a huge indictment against him by the international community.

Therefore, I am happy to say, as I listen to my colleagues on both sides, that we are going to pass this extension unanimously. We are sending a message internationally by saying we are part of NATO, will remain part of NATO and we want to get rid of the president. Canada is telling people that it is there to help protect the people who seek legitimate democratic rights and the rule of law.

I am glad this message will go to the international community that Canada will stand firmly and solidly in promotion of its core and democratic values, democracy and the rule of law. We will not accept people like Mr. Gadhafi or anybody else around world who pick up arms and kill their people. Mr. Gadhafi is not the only one. It happened before him, but I hope it will not happen in the future.

However, if it does, this mission will be an example that the international community will respond. Not only will the international community respond but countries like Canada will also respond. The debate held over this year will send a unanimous message to the international community, the world and to dictators that we will not remain silent.

● (1245)

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the parliamentary secretary is concerned about this issue. In the lead-up to the decision by the Security Council, the position of the government was that it would keep all options open and would wait for the Security Council resolution, despite calls by some parties and some elements in Canada to take action on the responsibility to protect.

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Do I gather that he and his party support the NDP position that to engage in a multinational intervention of this nature by using the responsibility to protect the United Nations needs to be part of this and that we should operate through the international body, which we note is improving in its ability to get involved in multilateral work to protect people? Is that the position he is putting forth here today?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, when the debate was going on, we were saying that all options were open. We were also campaigning behind the scenes at the United Nations Security Council to get this thing going, but publicly, until a decision was made by that body, it was not possible for us to say anything.

However, I can assure the hon. member, under every circumstance, that Canada was very active at the United Nations. We were there to ensure that a strong message was sent to say we were striving for those values about which we have talked. I can assure him right now that this government will continue working with multilateral organization, including the UN, at all relevant times to ensure this is done.

• (1250)

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ends of revolutions can be very messy affairs. I thank the parliamentary secretary for his remarks about Canadian values, promoting democracy and the rule of law.

If Mr. Gadhafi were to leave his country tomorrow, we still would not have democracy and the rule of law in Libya.

Would the parliamentary secretary be able to promise that Canada would remain involved in Libya to the point where we would have democracy and the rule of law in Libya?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to tell my hon. colleague, yes. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister were at the G8 meeting in France. The political issue on the table was how we would help all these countries. The Prime Minister made it very clear that Canada would stay to help the Arab spring revolution find its feet.

I agree with him, there is no point in creating a vacuum. If we create a vacuum, then we create anarchy, and that is not the intention of anybody, including the G8.

We will be working with our partners in the G8 to ensure that we build the institutions that will provide freedom and the rule of law in that country.

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the crisis in Libya is very concerning, not only to members of this House, but also to all Canadians.

Could the member outline for the House some of the consequences for Libyans, women, children, all the innocent civilians and the world, if countries like Canada pull back or weaken our diplomatic, military and especially our humanitarian efforts currently under way?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, the member hit the nail right on the head with her very excellent question.

If we move out, then the whole thing will collapse into anarchy. It is not what we want. We want to ensure that the international

community stands with the people who are legitimately asking for democratic rights. That is a core value for Canada and Canada will remain strongly committed, as the Prime Minister has said on the world stage.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate today. We are trying to achieve something here that Canadians can support and there is indeed a legitimate debate taking place just as there was on March 21.

Although we share the goal of protecting civilians in Libya, there is a certain set of issues that our party, in particular, has found important to insert into the debate and into Canada's actions in Libya. We found it necessary to do that back in March when the motion that was being discussed between the parties and being presented by the government, after the United Nations Security Council resolution 1973, was simply dealing with the military aspect of what Canadian efforts would be.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs talked about what goes on behind the scenes. Well, behind the scenes over the weekend leading to that resolution there was considerable input by my colleague, the critic for foreign affairs, the member for Ottawa Centre, and myself on the shape of that resolution. It was very important for us to see in that resolution Parliament supporting and promoting all aspects of UN resolution 1973, which is again what we are doing here today.

In his speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs accepted our interest to have on the record the changes pertaining to the humanitarian side and the stepping up of diplomatic efforts in achieving a lasting resolution in Libya.

The situation, of course, is changing, but the situation is changing because we had an expectation I suppose that this would not last very long. However, we have seen it last a lot longer than we expected.

We have heard that the diplomatic efforts needed to be stepped up and of the need for, as the resolution itself points out, a ceasefire as a primary goal of the intervention in order to protect civilians. We have also heard over the past number of weeks a considerable amount of talk by, in some cases, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and, particularly, the Minister of National Defence on something that is seen to be more than that. The mission and goal of protecting civilians had changed to something different. We were into some sort of regime change as an objective of the NATO mission.

We have an objection to that. This intervention is based on the responsibility to protect, and the necessity of intervening in another country militarily is part of that end, but it is also to avoid a situation where interventions take place to affect a change in the regime in some other country.

It is not for this country to do that. This is why we have insisted in our amendments that there be recognition that the results of what we are proposing here would end up with having a Libyan-led political transition that must take place in Libya, and that is the goal here.

I have heard the Minister of National Defence come out with statements that I would refer to as a “muscular militarism”, a bellicose state that Canada is somehow going to play a different role in the world from here on in. We are using our military as an aim in foreign policy and building ourselves up in the world through that means.

We do not support that approach. We do not support that kind of foreign policy for Canada. It is not in keeping with Canada's tradition and we speak out against it.

As we speak out against that, we also recognize that it is not what the Canadian leader who is on the ground directing this mission on behalf of NATO says. I will quote from yesterday's *Globe and Mail* in an extensive article by Paul Koring, who is very knowledgeable in military affairs. He interviewed Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard and said:

But he carefully sticks to the UN mandate that the conflict isn't to achieve regime change, just to protect civilians.

He talks about Colonel Gadhafi, as many would, and we all understand that.

● (1255)

He quotes Lieutenant General Bouchard as saying:

This is someone is giving orders to go and kill his own people...He has lost his moral authority to lead his nation—

This is the general who is coordinating all of the NATO actions, including the efforts by the French and the British who on their own wanted to use armed helicopters as part of this, to which he insisted would have to be brought in under NATO command as well.

When talking about Gadhafi the general said:

He has lost his moral authority to lead his nation...but my job is not regime change.

I thank General Bouchard for stating that so emphatically and clearly, so that we will not be confused, regardless of the kind of statements that we hear from the Minister of National Defence.

As defence critic for the New Democratic Party and the official opposition, I do have to raise one important point coming out of the Minister of National Defence's speech. I have to acknowledge that he was very moderate in his tone today. I thank him for that. I hope he continues that and that it is evidence of a new approach by the government on this issue.

I see the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence. I congratulate him on his new position and on being elected, and joining us here in this House. I know he himself has broad experience in providing diplomatic service to our nation and I thank him for that. However, I have a problem and perhaps he can address it. I did not get a chance to ask the minister himself.

It has to do with perhaps a bit of redefinition by NATO of the objectives because the minister sort of said this came from resolution 1973, but it actually comes from the NATO mission objectives. One, of course, is to end the attacks on civilians. That is consistent in both of those.

The one that causes me some difficulty from a strategic point of view is the verifiable withdrawal of the regime's military and

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paramilitary forces to bases and unhindered access for humanitarian aid.

I accept the latter, but not the verifiable withdrawal of the regime's military and paramilitary forces to bases as a requirement and objective of the UN mission.

We know a ceasefire is the objective. There have been various attempts to see that happen by asking Mr. Gadhafi to take steps that he has not taken. However, if the objective is to get everybody back to their barracks and back to their bases, how can that be accomplished if one of the targets of the NATO mission has consistently been the barracks of soldiers operated by Gadhafi? If barracks are being targeted and at the same time the objective is to get everybody to come back to the barracks, how does that make military sense? Is there not a significant conflict?

I hope that the hon. parliamentary secretary will have an opportunity in questions and comments to address that because I think it is an important point if we are to achieve the possibility of a speedy resolution to this particular conflict.

For example, I note that Turkey has been active on the diplomatic score. We saw a report on Sunday regarding members of the Turkish diplomatic corps meeting with Mr. Gadhafi and, in fact, offering him guarantees of protection in an attempt to get a ceasefire operating there. Unfortunately, there has been no success to date. Nonetheless, there seems to be some significant effort in that regard, an enhanced diplomatic effort by our partners.

I believe we still have a good relationship with Turkey despite some resolutions by this government and we should because Turkey is key in this regard. I believe the parliamentary secretary could tell us from his own experience in Afghanistan and elsewhere that Turkey is a key state in dealing with people and other nations, and other countries in that part of the world. I will leave that to my foreign affairs colleague to talk more about that.

However, I believe Turkey provides a terrific potential for a bilateral relationship with Canada both economically and obviously on the diplomatic side. Here is an example where Turkey may have some credibility in that region and can help in this matter. We should perhaps work closely with it.

I do still have a problem with this stated objective here and how that intersects with the ability to achieve a ceasefire, which frankly is the first objective. If we look at the United Nations Security Council resolution 1973, number one is to obtain a ceasefire and protect civilians. That is the way to do it.

● (1300)

We realize we are dealing with an unusual individual in the case of Colonel Gadhafi. I will not use some of the epithets that were used earlier. We do know, of course, that he stands accused of significant humanitarian crimes and war crimes, and we all hope these are dealt with in the appropriate forum. In the meantime, there is significant effort to be undertaken.

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I will add to some of the concerns we had here. We recognize, of course, that there is a lot of work still to be done. We have had an intervention in the form of a request to members of Parliament. I am sure other members of Parliament have received these. I know my colleague, the member for Ottawa Centre, and I received correspondence from the Canadian Libyan Council seeking our support for the continuation of the support for UN resolution 1973 and Canada's action. It specifically referred to the continued shelling and bombing. The letter of June 5 said:

[...] it is our wish that NATO step-up its efforts in the Western Nafusa Mountain region where civilians have been suffering from shelling at the hands of Gadhafi troops for months.

Then the letter makes reference to the humanitarian aid report for further information. This is the Canadian Libyan Council that speaks on behalf of Libyan Canadians across the country. It has expressed very strong support for the intervention by Canada as part of this mission.

This is an important function that still continues. We do not want to see a circumstance where we get involved in a quagmire with no end. We want to see swift action to resolve this issue, and I think it may be that the objectives spelled out here in the NATO objectives could be a hindrance to that if that is stated as an objective without the means to get there, particularly if there is continued bombing of barracks and no other means of going about that solution.

With these kinds of concerns here, the bellicose talk and the muscular militarism we are hearing from the Minister of National Defence in particular and others, we are also hearing from other countries. We have heard it from the U.K., France and other countries at the G8.

We all share a similar view of the fact that Colonel Gadhafi is not the kind of person we have any respect for. We would think that any post-conflict regime or situation in Libya, as chosen by the Libyan people, would not include Colonel Gadhafi. I think that is a given. If the people of Libya had a choice, I think that is what they would be. However, we want to see this as a Libyan-led solution and not one that is affected by military action under the responsibility to protect.

We have to be careful about what we are doing and we have to be careful that we do it in a way that respects the international regime under which we are doing this. The responsibility to protect is an emerging doctrine that is becoming a part of the convention in international law. It is something we must do right because if we do not do it right, it may be very difficult to do it again. That is an important marker to lay down here, that, when talking about this kind of action, a lot of people in this country, and rightly so, are very leery of Canadian involvement in military action outside this country. We have seen from history what happens when we start something and do not know where to finish it.

We have seen that in the Afghanistan conflict. Our party took a very strong position on this. There was a point when we said that we wanted Canada to leave. Canada was not, in our view, to continue the military mission in Afghanistan. We felt it was time to bring that to an end.

● (1305)

We have seen what can happen when we start in one place and all of a sudden something called mission creep takes over. That was the

danger we spoke about on March 21, and it was a danger that we kept repeating when we heard talk of regime change in Libya as part of the goals of this mission. This is something that we want to avoid. Canadians do not want us to get into another quagmire, where we see Canadian involvement to the extent that Canadians did not know what they were supporting in the beginning.

There are many who believe that when we talked about a no-fly zone, it was simply a matter of taking planes out of the air that were going to bomb facilities or bomb civilians. However, the reality set in pretty quickly when bombing missions were taking out anti-aircraft guns and tanks and planes, and their ability to drop bombs on civilians. That shocked some people in this country. When we start taking that further again and start talking about regime change or using loose language, which is irresponsible by the leaders of this country, then Canadians get very worried.

We want, as much as possible, to frame Canada's actions clearly within UN resolution 1973. Our amendments to the motion today are clearly designed to do that, to emphasize that all aspects of UN resolution 1973 must be acted on by government. We have laid out some specific measures that we would want to see in any resolution passed by the House in order to continue this mission.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member for St. John's East that the very precise language he has used regarding objectives on the basis of UN resolutions and other multilateral sources of authority for our operations in Libya coheres with the policy and the understanding of this government on what the objectives are.

Countries like Turkey have a role to play.

If Colonel Gadhafi's forces were to make a demonstrable move away from the operational areas where they have been harming civilians, this would very likely have an impact on NATO targeting, including the targeting of bases and barracks.

I would ask my colleague from St. John's East whether he is not reassured that in this mission so far, given the nature of the application of force by Canadian aircraft and others, the very low number of civilian casualties caused by allied forces is an immensely favourable sign, in the early going of this mission at least, and contributing heavily to the chances of achieving the objective that we all share?

● (1310)

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, we have seen a high level of assessment of targets throughout this mission to date.

My colleague and I asked for and received a very high level and detailed briefing by Foreign Affairs and military officials on how this was operating. We were involved with the Judge Advocate General's office and the Judge Advocate General himself was part of this. We went over in great detail how these targets are chosen, the level of authority given, the ability of the pilots to turn back, which has actually happened, when there is some doubt as to the nature of the target and the possibility of civilians being injured. I know that one error was made in targeting rebel forces as opposed to government forces. There has been a very low level of civilian casualties on the NATO side. That is commendable.

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I would also refer hon. members to the article in yesterday's paper where General Bouchard talked in specific detail as to how this actually happens and how missions are turned down and turned back, how missions must be approved at the highest level, even coming back to Ottawa in case of Canadian targets. That is commendable.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's comments. It comes across fairly clearly that the New Democrats would strongly oppose the mission involving any form of a regime change. Then when I hear the government members, they seem to be completely at odds with that.

Are there any circumstances where the member could envision Colonel Gadhafi retaining any power whatsoever in a new Libya?

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty clear that UN resolution 1973 was aimed at achieving a ceasefire as soon as possible and to engage in a settlement of the existing differences and, essentially, to re-establish a new political future in Libya in light of the opposition. It is not up to Canada to decide what that should be. It is up to the Libyan people.

The question is based on a false premise, that we here in Canada, that we in the Canadian government, should decide who should participate in any government of Libya. That is for the Libyan people to decide. That is why our motion talks about a Libyan-led solution to the crisis and to the future of government in Libya. I guess that is the simplest way to put it.

Regime change by a foreign nation is really intervention in someone else's affairs or taking sides in a civil war, which leads us down the slippery slope to intervention in every crisis in the world.

• (1315)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his work on this file. I have been working closely with him.

One of the concerns that many have is how we balance this mission out. We need to see requisite diplomatic supports and engagement with other countries. One of the supports that is very important is the contact group. The government will know that a contact group was formed from UN resolution 1973 and that it has had meetings.

I want to ask my colleague about the importance of Canada participating a little more fervently in the contact group, including in the coming meetings in Turkey, and what Canada can do to ensure that we do more on the diplomatic side because, clearly, that is something that needs more support.

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, we hear from this government and heard today a phrase that it likes to use, the "whole of government approach". Now a whole of government approach sounds great; it sounds like something is really happening.

However, whenever I hear that phrase, I immediately ask where is the content? Where is the detail? What part of government is involved? Where is the diplomatic effort? What exactly are we doing on the humanitarian side?

When I hear about whole of government, my conclusion is that there is no answer to that question; it is just the cover the government is using to say that it wants to be more involved.

The contact group is a good example of that. Who was there? I have nothing against the associate minister of defence responsible for procurement, but the associate minister is not the person to send to the contact group on Libya. What is that all about? Where is the Minister of Foreign Affairs? Why is he not there? Or the parliamentary secretary? Or someone else? Or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, if there are issues related to defence? I do wonder when we talk about that.

We also have to see the specifics. That is why we have these things in our motion. We are hoping to get the kinds of answers that the Canadian people truly want to see, that Canada is doing more than just sending jets to participate in this because the government wants to show we can participate in international affairs and show some leadership, et cetera. These are the talking points that we are hearing from the government, but we want to see some real action on all fronts.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard the media reporting that the Minister of National Defence has said that our operations in Libya have already cost \$26 million and we can expect them to cost even more.

Considering that we have spent \$26 million in just a few months and we will probably spend more between now and September, until we can reposition ourselves on the situation, does my colleague believe that Canada's involvement and the money we have spent have had any influence on the situation in Libya thus far? Does he really believe that Canada has good reason to be involved in the conflict, which seems to be more of an internal conflict in a country that is not Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, of course, it is another country than Canada.

However, Canada is an international actor. We support the United Nations. We support human rights and we supported the responsibility to protect as a doctrine.

As someone said recently, if we are going to have UN-led world, then there have to be countries willing to participate and support UN actions.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to add my voice to this important debate about Canada's continuing engagement in Libya.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale, and focusing these remarks in support of those made by the Minister of National Defence, particularly on our military contribution. I am providing a few more details by way of an update as to the nature of that contribution and its effect on the ground, in the air and on the seas off Libya.

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I would like to pay tribute to all members who have spoken so far in this debate for the sense of unity and purpose prevailing in this House so far today, and for the constructive manner and frame of mind in which all have come to this debate today.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

The contributions by the Canadian Forces to Operation Mobile give them an opportunity to demonstrate their exceptional capabilities once again. This operation proves that the Canadian Forces continue to maintain a high level of operational readiness and to show the utmost professionalism, which has been true for decades.

As the minister mentioned earlier, the Canadian Forces are once again showing their leadership on the international stage by standing up for the interests and values of Canadians. We are making a vital contribution to NATO's Operation Unified Protector, which aims to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973 in order to put an end to violence in Libya.

And it is a Canadian, one of our own, Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard—who is also a gifted communicator, as was clearly demonstrated in the interview he gave in yesterday's *Globe and Mail*—who is the commanding officer.

[*English*]

The Canadian Forces are playing this key role, alongside NATO allies and partners, in protecting Libyan civilians. However, despite that and in spite of this progress, the Gadhafi regime continues to use violence against its own citizens. It is this conclusion that lies at the base of the need for this debate today.

I want to take this opportunity to expand on the remarkable efforts our military is undertaking as part of Operation Mobile. The current contribution includes three task forces. As the minister said, that represents approximately 650 uniform personnel, but they are broken into three main elements: a coordinating team, Task Force Naples; an air component, Task Force Libeccio; and the naval element, Task Force Charlottetown.

Task Force Naples is our national coordination component linking Canadian expeditionary force command headquarters here in Ottawa with NATO's Combined Joint Task Force Unified Protector headquarters in Europe and coordinating our forces' participation, as well as providing staff for Lieutenant-General Bouchard.

Task Force Libeccio, led by Colonel Alain Pelletier, is our air component for the mission. Canadian aircraft is flying out of two NATO bases in Italy: Trapani Birgi in western Sicily and Sigonella in eastern Sicily. Sicily has featured in our military history in the past, so it is certainly not unknown in the annals of Canadian military operations, but, for the reference of members, people going to Trapani fly with Ryanair. Sigonella, as some may remember, was an air base featured in the terrorist incident in 1985 involving the *Achille Lauro*, a ship that was hijacked on the Mediterranean Sea.

Aircraft currently assigned to the task force include seven CF-18 fighters, two maritime patrol aircraft, two CC-130 Hercules and one CC-150 Polaris air refueller. Our CF-18s operate in pairs with one spare and are high-performance multi-purpose fighters.

The important point is to emphasize the significant role that these assets have played within the NATO effort in the air and on the sea in the roles that they have been given. In particular, our refuelling aircraft, our tankers, have played a vital role in keeping not only Canadian aircraft operating over Libya in surveillance and attack roles but also in search and rescue roles because that is required as pilots enter dangerous parts of airspace and stay in the air longer than otherwise would have been possible.

These are interoperable assets with allied fighters. They are capable of conducting air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. In Libya, they are doing both: enforcing the Security Council mandated low-fly zone above Libya and engaging ground targets, as required, through that very rigorous targeting process led by Lieutenant-General Bouchard, including the authority granted by this House to a government that oversees these operations and throughout the civilian oversight to the military chain of command that NATO is proud to call its own.

Canada is one of only 8 out of NATO's 28 members participating in air-to-ground strikes, which are targeting vehicle and ammunition storage facilities, electronic warfare sites and enemy vehicles. I would like to point out that while the CF-18s are themselves highly versatile platforms, the fact that they departed Canada for Italy in less than three hours after the Prime Minister's announcement on March 18 is testament to the preparedness, responsiveness and flexibility of the Canadian Forces.

Receiving less attention, but no less important, are the refuelling aircraft, vital to the success of the overall campaign. As a NATO spokesman recently said:

This is the most diverse and extensive air-to-air refuelling operation in the history of aviation and is a clear example of the strength and cohesiveness of NATO.

The ability to deliver fuel in the air has allowed NATO strike aircraft to simply do more.

Finally, our Aurora maritime patrol aircraft also play a key part in the operation, conducting surveillance and reconnaissance missions. These missions, conducted mostly in the vicinity of Brega, Misrata and Ajdabiya, provide valuable information about what is happening on the ground.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

As for the naval sector, Commander Craig Skjerpen and the crew of HMCS *Charlottetown* have been demonstrating the flexibility of our Halifax class frigates since they arrived in the Mediterranean on March 17. Some 18 NATO ships are patrolling constantly to ensure compliance with the arms embargo. This embargo is having a positive effect, since it is reducing the amount of illegal weaponry getting into Libya and this effect will only increase over time.

While NATO ships are enforcing the embargo, the alliance is ensuring that marine traffic can flow freely, particularly so that humanitarian aid can be sent.

Government Orders

[English]

Charlottetown has also supported mine clearance operations in Misrata Harbour. Last month, for instance, *Charlottetown* escorted Belgian and British mine countermeasure ships while they spent a week clearing Misrata Harbour of dangerous mines that might otherwise have had a devastating effect on civilian maritime traffic. That was crucially important at that time because Gadhafi's forces, as hon. members will recall, had surrounded Misrata on three sides and humanitarian shipments could only enter the city by sea.

It is important to note that while Task Forces Libeccio and *Charlottetown* are doing outstanding work in their respective domains, they are not working independently of one another.

On April 26, while patrolling close to the Libyan coastline, *Charlottetown* tracked vehicles firing rockets near populated areas of Misrata. This information was relayed to Canadian Forces members aboard a NATO airborne warning and control system, which was then passed to air operations in Italy. Canadian CF-18s were airborne in response within minutes. The pilots tracked the origin of fire, confirmed hostile acts being committed against civilians and dropped precision guided bombs to destroy two military vehicles.

That is a very concrete example of how, even when targets are not pre-planned, Canadian air and naval assets work flawlessly together in a coalition environment to prevent civilian casualties.

[Translation]

The Canadian Forces are making a considerable, large-scale effort to ensure the success of Operation Unified Protector. We have demonstrated the versatility and effectiveness of our contribution.

[English]

Given what we have heard today, we on this side of the House have every confidence that there are unprecedented grounds for supporting the motion today. I would encourage all hon. members, not only to support today's motion to continue Canadian engagement but also to take pride in the fact that Canada's unified approach in this House and elsewhere to this mission has been absolutely crucial in securing the international resolve, determination and effort on the ground that is now serving to protect Libyan civilians across that country and to protect some of the gains of the Arab spring. We know they are not yet irreversible, that this complex process throughout the Mediterranean area is still unfolding, but our operation in Libya with NATO under a UN mandate is absolutely vital to giving hope to a beleaguered population.

• (1330)

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was certainly pleased to hear the member opposite give his comment. We had the opportunity to speak to each other during the campaign through the media at various times and I enjoyed the exchanges that we had.

The question before us has to do with resolving a tragic situation in Libya, which all members have shown themselves deeply committed to resolving. I wonder if the member would comment on the request that members of the official opposition have made and others to ensure that, as we proceed, any and all information that is made available will be provided to other members of the House.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his success in the election as well, which I did have the opportunity to observe more closely, thanks to the magic of televised media across this country.

I can assure the hon. member and other hon. members opposite that the spirit of consultation and of openness that has prevailed so far in this mission through briefings and through debates like this one is one that we wish to continue. Certainly today's debate gives us all the more reason to do so. We must not forget how powerful a tool unity is for the House and for this country when we act together on the basis of unanimity and consensus in this House. It has helped us move other countries in the right direction. It has helped to show determination again to a beleaguered people and it has gone on the best tradition of all parties in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are encouraged by the degree to which we are engaged in this debate.

Is it the government's intention to continue to have debates in regard to Libya if further extensions will be required three months from now or in September? Could the member give a clear indication of whether this will be an ongoing commitment by the government to ensure we can continue to build on the consensus by allowing debates of this nature regarding Libya?

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, the resolution authorizing this military operation was passed by the Security Council on March 17. If my memory serves, the first debate in this House was four days later. We are having a debate quite soon after the recent general election. The need for further debates will be determined by the situation and by the government, but in consultation with all members.

Because we were awaiting an election call at the time, the first call I heard directly for Canadian involvement in a military role to protect civilians in Libya came from the Hon. Stephen Lewis who was addressing the 60th anniversary of the Ajax Rotary Club on March 17, the very day the resolution was passed. He made a very impassioned plea for just the kind of action that we are taking today and are determined to take for the next three and a half months pending further developments on the ground.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard some figures on the cost of this mission. The total cost estimate is \$60 million. Today, the Rideau Institute has questioned that figure, saying that it is more likely to be in the range of \$80 million to \$85 million. We know the government is not that good with numbers when it comes to military costs and expenditures. Could the member tell us where these numbers come from and how he supports their accuracy?

Government Orders

• (1335)

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, the numbers are very accurate. We have no reason to doubt the professionalism of the Canadian Forces in accounting, as in the other fields it must master to mount an operation like this. The cost translates into roughly \$10 million per month. If it changes, we have every intention of informing this House.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to speak since the occurrence of the last election, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Mississauga—Erindale for the trust they have placed in me in returning me to this place to represent them. I pledge to them today that I will work each and every day to the best of my ability to continue to earn that trust as we go forward over the next four years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family, friends, supporters and volunteers for their efforts on my behalf in assisting me to return to this place to continue to represent the people of Mississauga—Erindale and the broader city of Mississauga.

I am pleased to participate today in this debate on the motion before the House which seeks the support of members to extend Canada's military engagement in Libya. In March of this year, the House unanimously adopted a motion deploring the ongoing use of violence by the Gadhafi regime against the Libyan people.

Our actions in Libya came after the passage of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973 and sought to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and populated areas under threat of attack.

At that time members from all parties stood together in support of Canada's engagement in Libya and for the men and women of the Canadian Forces. It was not then and should not be now an issue for partisan or political games. It is an issue of human rights and we believe that the horrific violence which is being imposed on the Libyan people must come to an end.

Canada has shown international leadership in Libya and from the outset has pushed for swift and decisive action. Abroad we have worked closely with international and regional partners, including the League of Arab States, the African Union, NATO partners and allies to press the regime to comply with its international obligations.

Canada, along with our NATO allies and partners, has called on the Libyan regime to respect a ceasefire and to adhere to the United Nations Resolution 1973. These calls have thus far been ignored.

We have clearly defined the three military objectives of the mission in Libya. First, an end to all attacks and threats of attack against civilians. Second, the withdrawal of the regime's military and paramilitary forces to their bases. Third, full and unhindered access to humanitarian aid to all those who need it across Libya.

None of these demands has been seriously considered by Gadhafi, even less respected. Gadhafi's attacks on his own population are unacceptable and abhorrent. We believe that he is a clear and present threat to both his people and to the stability in the region, a region which has been undergoing an important transition.

Clearly we have reached the point of no return and we need to be forward-looking. The overwhelming majority of Libyan citizens cannot imagine a future or building a civil society in Libya in association with Gadhafi or his inner circle.

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has requested that arrest warrants be issued for Gadhafi, his son, Saif al-Islam Gadhafi and his brother-in-law, Abdullah Senussi. The prosecutor alleged that these individuals have planned and directed crimes against humanity, that is they have organized widespread and systematic attacks on civilian populations, including murder, torture and persecution.

The International Commission of Inquiry conducted an investigation and also concluded that crimes against humanity and war crimes were being committed by the government forces of Libya.

Canada continues to support calls for Gadhafi's inevitable departure. We are encouraged by the increasing international consensus in that regard.

Consistent with our principle of diplomacy, we are engaging more closely with the legitimate representatives of the Libyan people who commit to stand by democratic and human rights principles and values. People in Benghazi, Misrata and other cities are being empowered to take on the responsibility of protecting civilians, developing policy and administrative structures, and providing urgent social services.

These are transformative moments and we should not underestimate how fragile and unique this period is. Canada will therefore enhance its engagement with the national transitional council which we base on a continued commitment to a vigorous democratic transition, respect for the rule of law and transparent governance.

As clearly expressed at the contact group meeting in the UAE, the national transitional council is endeavouring credible efforts to prepare for the future and set Libya on a decisive path of transition. Canada and its members stand ready to offer support for this process, as well as for the political dialogue led by the very capable UN special envoy, al-Khatib.

It is clear that we expect full compliance with the international humanitarian law and human rights as a new and free Libya takes shape. The national transitional council must ensure the protection of all civilians, including migrants and sub-Saharan Africans.

• (1340)

We welcome and fully support the NTC's vision for a democratic Libya and road map for a political transition.

For all these reasons, Canada considers the interim national council the legitimate representative of the Libyan people.

However, let me be clear. Libya is not ours to reconcile, nor is it ours to reconstruct. The reconciliation and reconstruction of Libya is a project that must be led and undertaken by the Libyan people.

Government Orders

As clearly expressed by the Libya contact group, the UN international regional partners and also Canada, will be there to provide help and support. Just as Canadians are actively engaged in protecting civilians from Gadhafi and his regime, we will also be there as they rebuild their country.

Despite progress that has been made, the reasons for which Parliament voted unanimously to endorse military engagement in Libya still exists today; so do the conditions that prompted the UN and NATO to act. Colonel Gadhafi must go. The Libyan people must be protected. For that reason, it is our position that Canada's role in Libya must continue.

Canada stands in solidarity with the Libyan people and is proud that our contributions will help them to determine their own united, independent and sovereign future.

I encourage all members to once again support this motion.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, let me congratulate the member on his re-election and on his position as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Now the minister two assistants, but these two parliamentary assistants seem to be adding, unfortunately, to the ambiguity of the government's position here.

When the member rises in the House and says, "Gadhafi must go. Gadhafi must go. Therefore, we are continuing our mission", pardon me if I assume from the member's remarks that the mission is to get rid of Gadhafi.

I am not trying to be nuanced here. Nobody likes Mr. Gadhafi, or Colonel Gadhafi, or whatever title he goes by. However, the fact of the matter is this is not about regime change and if the UN resolution is to be followed precisely the way we believe it should, then the talk of the parliamentary secretary is confusing people and is leading to me to wonder whether General Bouchard is right when he says, "My job is not regime change" or whether the parliamentary secretary is when he says "Gadhafi must go. Therefore, we are continuing our mission".

Which is it? We cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I have worked together in the past on the special committee on Afghanistan and I wish to congratulate him on his re-election and his re-appointment as the critic for defence for the New Democratic Party.

The member should know that we are being very clear. Our mission is not regime change. Our mission is to protect the civilians of Libya. As they go forward, it is our view that they will select someone else to lead their country and we will work with the government they choose. The military will not be involved in any way, shape or form in making that change for them. They will make that change themselves.

Our brave men and women are simply there, flying those missions, to protect the civilians from the atrocities that have been allegedly and reportedly committed by the Libyan regime to date.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Calgary East said that Canada was in Libya to promote Canadian values such as democracy and the rule of law.

Then I just heard the member opposite say that Libya is not ours to reconstruct.

I wonder if the member has any opinions going forward, if a new government takes control of Libya, to what extent is Canada willing to guide, forcibly or otherwise, that new government so that democracy and rule of law are present in the new Libya?

• (1345)

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, Canada has supported and continues to support, many countries around the world with the development of democratic institutions. We will continue to work with all the international partners, the United Nations and the regional partners in that region of the world to support the development of democracy in Libya. When it becomes clear what the situation is following the cessation of hostilities, Canada will certainly be supporting the development of democratic institutions.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his enlightened speech. I think everyone here understands that we are extending the mission to protect civilians in Libya. We know that the military assets that are being used by Colonel Gadhafi have been used against his own people. If we want to bring about the change and the aid that is so desperately needed, we ought to make sure that we provide that type of security. That is really what it is all about.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to expand upon Canada's role, that we have announced just today, in expanding humanitarian aid. Also, could he explain what we would do to construct the required institutions to support democracy and ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support the transition away from what has been there to hopefully what we would see as a new democracy in Libya?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, as the member would know, earlier today the hon. Minister of International Cooperation announced an additional \$2 million in aid. That is in addition to the \$8 million that has already been provided to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which provide support and assistance to victims of gender-based violence.

We will continue to do these sorts of things and our military will continue to protect those who are providing humanitarian assistance to the people who need it in Libya.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to support the UN mission in Libya and Canada's participation in it. I join with those who believe that this mission is justified and that it should be extended because of Moammar Gadhafi's actions towards the Libyan people. The sad reality of the situation in Libya is that the real victims of Colonel Gadhafi's lust for power are the civilians. Make no mistake about it, Libya's civilians are not just collateral damage from a conflict between two factions. They are being directly targeted by Colonel Gadhafi and his armed forces.

Government Orders

And this is not coming from marginal sources with questionable information. It is coming from organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the International Criminal Court. As a result of an investigation, the International Criminal Court prosecutor concluded that Gadhafi personally ordered attacks on unarmed civilians, that he authorized the use of aircraft to attack protesters, that his troops attacked Libyan civilians in their homes and in public areas, that he posted snipers outside mosques to kill people leaving after prayer and that he used heavy artillery to fire on funeral processions.

This is not the only source of evidence. A mission by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to Tripoli and rebel-held areas found evidence that Gadhafi's troops had attacked civilians, workers and medical units. For its part, Human Rights Watch has documented serious violations of the laws of war by Libyan forces, including indiscriminate attacks in residential areas in Misrata and in the villages of the Nafusa mountains. In February, Amnesty International also found overwhelming evidence of the use of lethal force against protesters who posed no threat and were directly targeted.

This evidence clearly shows that Colonel Gadhafi's actions do not respect the laws of war and that some of these actions could be condemned as war crimes. These violent attacks against the population justify the intervention of the international community because history has shown that action must be taken in such situations and that prompt action is vital.

When I was a member of the Canadian Forces, a number of colleagues spoke to me about their experiences in countries ravaged by civil war. Whether it was Rwanda or Yugoslavia, they talked about horrible situations in which no child should be involved.

The quick adoption of resolution 1973 and the rapid deployment of international forces to put in place a no-fly zone must be applauded. However, history shows us that it is also important to act with a clearly defined mandate. For that reason it is vital to clearly define the mandate of the troops deployed, to establish a specific time frame, and to target interventions based on clearly-defined objectives, those set out by the UN resolution. We must put a stop to attacks against civilians. Libyan military and paramilitary forces must return to their bases, and humanitarian aid must be accessible to all those in need.

● (1350)

[English]

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has investigated and has drawn conclusion of the following allegations of war crimes.

The evidence shows that Moammar Gadhafi personally ordered attacks on unarmed Libyan civilians, including the use of aircraft to attack protesters. His forces attacked Libyan civilians in their homes and in public space, repressed demonstrations with live ammunition, used heavy artillery against participants in funeral processions and placed snipers to kill those leaving mosques after the prayers. Gadhafi forces have lists with the names of alleged dissidents. They are being arrested, put into prisons in Tripoli, tortured and made to disappear.

The UN Human Rights Council's mission to Tripoli and rebel-held areas in late April found evidence of war crimes by Gadhafi's forces, including attacks on civilians, aid workers and medical units. Aircraft, tanks, artillery grad rockets and snipers were used. It also found some evidence of crimes by opposition armed forces, including the arbitrary detention and torture of suspected Gadhafi supporters. The commission did not find evidence that the opposition armed forces were part of any widespread or systematic attacks against the civilian population.

Human Rights Watch has documented serious violations of the laws of war by Libyan government forces, including repeat indiscriminate attacks into residential neighbourhoods in Misrata and towns in the western Nafusa Mountains.

Amnesty International has also found clear evidence of the use of lethal force against protesters in February and, more worrying still, that in many cases protesters who posed no threat were deliberately killed.

The International Criminal Court is also investigating allegations that Gadhafi ordered his troops to commit the systematic rape of women in rebel-held areas, based on information that Gadhafi himself authorized the rapes and provided drugs to enhance the ability of his force to rape women. Due to the social stigma associated with reporting rape and the displacement of civilians, it is difficult to know how widespread the use of rape as a weapon of war is, but the ICC has received information that there are several hundred victims in some areas.

● (1355)

[Translation]

As far as humanitarian aid is concerned, the situation in Libya is alarming. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people have been killed in the past four months of combat; close to half a million civilians have left their homes and fled the country since the crisis started; another 330,000 people in the country have had to leave their homes to seek shelter elsewhere in Libya. These people have to live with very little and face shortages of food and water. They have almost no access to medicines and are unable to travel because of fuel shortages.

The situation is even worse at the border with Tunisia, where Tunisian authorities are struggling to receive thousands of Libyan refugees who want to flee their country. The United Nations estimates that as many as 3.6 million people could be in need of humanitarian assistance and that is where our government can and must do more. So far, only half the United Nations' requests for aid have been met.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

If we talk about people being killed, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 people have been killed on both sides in four months of fighting in Libya. Almost 500,000 people have left the country since the crisis began, while about 330,000 people have been internally displaced. It is estimated by the UN that at least 1,000 people, mainly men, have been kidnapped or have disappeared in Misrata since the conflict began in February.

The UN refugee agency reports that tens of thousands of people on both sides of the battle lines in Libya are facing a critical shortage of essential goods, including food, medicine and fuel.

The situation on the Tunisian border is increasingly strained as Tunisian authorities struggle to absorb the tens of thousands of Libyans fleeing the conflict. Under the United Nations' worst-case scenario, as many as 3.6 million people in the country could eventually require humanitarian assistance.

This is why we have to support those people. We need to be there to support all the women and all the people living in Libya.

[Translation]

There are probably people in Canada of Libyan origin and I sincerely believe they would be proud that we are supporting them. I would not want to have to inform any of them that their family members back in Libya had been killed or raped. I believe we must support them out of respect for human rights. These people have the right to feel safe in their homes.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member will have 10 minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House continues the debate on the motion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[Translation]***CANADA POST**

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its 2009 annual report, Canada Post confirmed its profitability for the 15th year in a row. It had consolidated net income of \$281 million on revenues of \$7.3 billion.

Canada Post's enabling legislation provides that this public service must be financially self-sufficient, not that it must seek to obtain profit at any cost or at the expense of providing equitable service everywhere, particularly in small communities.

The federal government must give clear instructions to Canada Post's management to make postal workers an offer that respects the spirit of the Canada Post Corporation Act. The government's current inaction regarding this labour dispute must not lead to the possibility of imposing special legislation that is unfair to those who helped build this crown corporation.

● (1400)

*[English]***DON VALLEY EAST**

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I happily stand in this House for the first time, being sent here by the constituents of Don Valley East. I thank them for their trust and confidence in electing me as their federal representative.

I am pleased to report that Don Valley East has already benefited from our economic action plan. In collaboration with the province and the city, there has been investment in major projects in our community such as upgrades to Victoria Park, trail and path rehabilitation of Anewan Greenbelt and Rowena Park, and marquee tourism events, just to name a few.

My constituents have expressed their support for our economic action plan and the recently tabled budget that promises to invest in our communities, businesses and social programs.

I thank all those who worked tirelessly for me on my campaign and continue to support me. I especially thank my wife, Lan, who has been by my side throughout this journey.

* * *

*[Translation]***LAURENTIDES—LABELLE**

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is my maiden speech in the House, and I would like to thank the people of Laurentides—Labelle for their clear confidence in me.

I would particularly like to congratulate the participants and organizers of the fourth Mont-Laurier Relay for Life, who helped make the June 10 event a huge success. Three hundred teams walked all night in a relay around the track behind the Saint-Joseph composite school to raise money for the fight against cancer. The 1,200 participants raised over \$264,000.

I had the honour to address the participants, volunteers and organizers who have set an example for this House. They expect us to work constructively towards the common good, despite our differences.

* * *

*[English]***PARLIAMENTARY OUTDOORS CAUCUS**

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues, both new and experienced, about the Parliamentary Outdoors Caucus, a non-partisan group which represents the Canadian heritage activities of hunting, fishing, sport shooting and trapping.

As the largest federal all-party caucus during the last Parliament, our goal is to preserve and promote these pursuits, protect them in law, and encourage the public to accept them as traditional outdoor heritage activities.

Statements by Members

Millions of rural and urban Canadians of all political affiliations, backgrounds, ages and abilities contribute over \$10 billion annually to the national economy, and support over 100,000 jobs through fishing and hunting activities.

I cordially invite all MPs and senators from all parties to read the information that has been sent to their offices about the Outdoors Caucus and join us as we ensure that these activities, our collective heritage, remain available to all Canadians.

* * *

BAIE-D'URFÉ

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the centennial of the town of Baie-d'Urfé in my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis.

On May 9, I attended a meeting of the Baie-d'Urfé junior council that re-enacted two of the town's earliest council meetings held on July 18 and September 16, 1911, respectively.

The junior council was created in 2008 under the leadership of Mayor Maria Tutino as a vehicle to allow Baie-d'Urfé's youth to get involved in decisions affecting their quality of life and as a way for them to learn about democratic government.

[Translation]

The junior council has already exerted its influence over a number of decisions, including installing fountains, building a safety fence at Allan's Hill and purchasing basketball nets for Picardy Park.

[English]

On May 12 the junior council elected its first cabinet with portfolios ranging from treasurer to security, environment, recreational activities and intercultural relations.

[Translation]

I invite all of the hon. members to spread the news of Baie-d'Urfé's junior council in the cities and towns in their ridings.

* * *

[English]

MANITOBA FLOODS

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Winnipeg South for allowing me to humbly stand before you again in this House.

I would also like to thank my wife Chantale for her constant support and advice through the years, as well as the support from our children Luke and Sarah.

During the recent campaign we experienced significant flooding in my province and in my riding. I would like to thank the campaign volunteers who put down their brochures and picked up sandbags to help the many residents who were at risk of flooding.

I am sure all parliamentarians will join me in expressing our sympathy for flood victims who are dealing with the devastating flooding that has gripped so many in our country.

I would like to express thanks to all the municipal leaders, emergency measures staff, and countless volunteers and military for all the help that they have given us.

I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for his commitments to this flood fight and for the significant investment that was made in the Manitoba floodway which once again saved my riding as it has many times in the past. While we cannot prevent these natural disasters, we can work with other levels of government to mitigate these disasters in the future.

I would also like to make mention of my Liberal opponent who also set aside his campaign to help the flood fight.

* * *

● (1405)

YOUTH CHARITABLE PROGRAM

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Canadian Tire Jumpstart Day held on May 28.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart is a community-based charitable program that helps financially disadvantaged youth participate in organized sports and recreation by covering registration fees, equipment and transportation costs. Of the customer donations to Canadian Tire Jumpstart, 100% is reinvested in the local community.

One in three Canadian families struggle to include their children in sport and recreation activities due to financial barriers. This year Canadian Tire Jumpstart reached its goal of \$3 million raised and is well on its way to helping 30,000 children this summer.

The Government of Canada has been a major supporter of Canadian Tire Jumpstart and since the program's inception in 2005, it has helped more than 300,000 children.

I would like to congratulate it on its success and ask each member of the legislature to join me in recognizing the great work Canadian Tire Jumpstart is doing for families across our country.

* * *

GRAND VALLEY

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to recognize the 150th anniversary of the town of Grand Valley.

First settled by the Joyce family in 1855, Grand Valley was originally known as Joyce's Corners. The first municipal council was formed in 1860 led by Reeve George Todd, some of whose descendants maintain their residence in Grand Valley to this very day.

From 1860 to 1886, the village was called Luther Village, at which point it was named Grand Valley for the beautiful Grand River which meanders through the downtown.

Today, Grand Valley is home to several community organizations, including the Lion's Club, the horticultural society, and the Grand Valley historical society.

Statements by Members

On the weekend of July 1, Grand Valley's current mayor, John Oosterhof, will join with residents and visitors to celebrate the town's 150th anniversary.

I ask that the House join me in congratulating the residents of Grand Valley as they mark this milestone.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am both moved and proud to be speaking for the first time in this House on behalf of the people of Trois-Rivières.

The people of Trois-Rivières who provided me with this opportunity come from all political parties, and I wish to thank them for their support.

Many of them heard and believed in the NDP's message about working together to find solutions to the issues affecting them.

I still have hope that the government will be open, given that many Canadians did not put their trust in the Conservatives. Canadians still expect their voices to be heard.

At a time when then the government is preparing to revisit representation here in the House, why not give real weight to each citizen's vote by implementing a system of proportional representation? And why not give Quebec the status it deserves as a founding nation and as a distinct society?

* * *

[*English*]

LIBYA

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 2 Canadians gave this government a strong mandate to represent Canada's interests and values at home and abroad.

Since coming to office, our Conservative government has implemented a principled foreign policy, as in Libya where Colonel Gadhafi has been waging war against innocent civilians, the very people he claims to represent. According to reports, his despicable actions include the torture of children and the use of rape as a weapon of war.

Our Conservative government has not and will not ignore the plight of the Libyan people. It is why we recognize the national transitional council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people. It is why we have pledged more humanitarian funding, including funds to help victims of sexual violence.

Today, we seek the unanimous consent of the House of Commons to extend the Canadian aspect of the NATO effort in Libya. We cannot sit idly by as Gadhafi's thirst for power continues to oppress the Libyan people and claim innocent lives.

I urge all members of this House to stand today and vote for the Libyan people.

●(1410)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians chose a strong, stable majority Conservative government that will deliver on improving the financial security of Canadian families. We intend to do just that.

This weekend, the members of the NDP will be discussing many issues at their party convention. Before they discuss any trade resolutions, I urge them to think about jobs for hard-working families. The NDP cannot claim to be concerned with creating new jobs while putting forward resolutions calling for a complete withdrawal from free trade agreements.

International trade is a kitchen table issue. It creates jobs, increases prosperity, and accounts for almost 60% of our annual GDP.

The NDP has opposed every single free trade deal that our government has put forward since 2006. Its platform does not mention free trade even once. This is a stark policy difference between this Conservative government and the NDP.

We call on the NDP to stand up for jobs and to stand up for free trade.

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HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, within an hour we will be commemorating national Holocaust Remembrance Day.

We will be remembering horrors too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened, with universal lessons: the dangers of state-sanctioned incitement of genocide where, as the courts have put it, the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers, it began with words; the danger of the oldest and most enduring of hatreds, anti-Semitism, reminding us that while it may begin with Jews it does not end with Jews; the danger of indifference and inaction in the face of evil, as with the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur, reminding us that nobody could say we did not know, we knew but did not act; and the danger of a culture of impunity, which only encourages and abets further atrocity.

We will be remembering the rescuers, the righteous among the nations, who demonstrated that one person, as in the case of Raoul Wallenberg, who is an honorary citizen of Canada, can stand up against evil, prevail and transform history.

Finally, we will be remembering the heroes among us today, the survivors and their families who endured the worst of humanity—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laval.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

SOCIAL ISSUES

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again congratulate all the newly elected and re-elected members who are here with us. I would also like to thank the voters of Laval who have given me the privilege of representing them in this House.

Our community also faces the challenges we spoke about during the course of the last election. We all know people who lie awake at night worrying about their retirement income or seniors who are unable to make ends meet. I spoke with people in my riding who are unable to find a family doctor, who have to wait for months to see a specialist and who are wondering if the health insurance system will still be in place for their children.

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LIBYA

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 2, Canadians gave our government a solid mandate to represent the interests and values of Canada at home and abroad.

Since taking power, our Conservative government has implemented a foreign policy based on these principles. It is no longer a matter of blindly following others for the sake of harmonious relations.

In Libya, Colonel Moammar Gadhafi is waging war on innocent civilians. There are reports of vile acts such as the torture of children and the use of rape as a weapon of war. Today, we are requesting the unanimous consent of the House to extend the mission by Canada and NATO to protect Libyans from the Gadhafi regime.

That is why we have committed more funding for humanitarian purposes. Some funds will go to help the victims of sexual violence. That is also why we now recognize the national transitional council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people. We encourage the other parties to support our efforts. We cannot stand by as Gadhafi continues to oppress the people of Libya and take innocent lives.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

BILL HUSSEY

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Scarborough Southwest lost a true hero last week with the passing of World War II veteran, Bill Hussey.

Mr. Hussey volunteered for many years, helping first and second graders learn to read at Courcellette Public School. Every student who attended the school over the last 30 years knew Mr. Hussey and were so fond of him that they dedicated a playground to him at the school in 2004.

Every year on Remembrance Day, Mr. Hussey would proudly wear his medals and his poppy and help the children pay tribute to Canada's veterans and fallen heroes. He served in the special forces in World War II, once parachuting behind enemy lines in Italy. He

would often share his memories of the war with the children and staff at the school.

Mr. Hussey was a kind, caring and gentle man who everyone knew as "Smiley". Mostly he was a legend to the staff and students of Courcellette Public School, and we in Scarborough Southwest will truly miss our hero.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL ISSUES

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 2, voters in the riding of Joliette decided to vote for change, and it is an honour for me to represent them.

I wish to extend a special thank you to my husband for his help. He has stood as an NDP candidate on six occasions. I would like to thank all my team members for their support and also the many volunteers who worked on my behalf.

In the riding of Joliette, there are families and seniors who have trouble making ends meet at the end of the month. This situation is unacceptable. I have been working for more than 30 years for a better society, for the betterment of women and families, and I will continue to do so.

I do not understand how anyone can vote against the NDP amendment to improve the living conditions of Canadians, to lift seniors out of poverty, to help low-income families and, finally, to stop—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

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[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's economic action plan has overseen more than 560,000 net new jobs created since July 2009.

We are on the right track with our recovery, but there is still work to be done to ensure that growth continues. We need to move to the next phase of Canada's economic action plan by ensuring quick passage of the budget before Parliament rises next week. The quick passage of our budget legislation will ensure that job creation continues.

This is a budget that contains numerous initiatives in support of Canada's forestry, mining, manufacturing, agriculture and aerospace sectors. This is a budget that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce said "—will continue to support the economic recovery and help Canadian businesses prosper and compete".

This is a budget that opposition members should get behind. We urge all opposition members to fully support budget 2011 and Canada's economic recovery.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***LIBYA**

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want assurance that the involvement in Libya will be in strict accordance with United Nations resolution 1973. That means it has to focus on civilian protection, humanitarian assistance and diplomatic support for the UN efforts to reach a ceasefire so that there can be, ultimately, a Libyan-led political resolution to the crisis. That is precisely what the New Democrat amendments to the motion propose today.

Will the government support our proposals?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has undertaken its involvement in Libya under United Nations resolution 1973, in concert with our allies. We have made it very clear all along that we are seeking the furtherance of that resolution and its objectives, and those will continue to be our actions.

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): I will assume that is a yes, Mr. Speaker, but I guess we will wait to see the results of the vote.

Yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs responded to our suggestion that there be increased humanitarian support for the people of Libya and gave confirmation today that there will be an additional \$2 million provided.

Now the question is what is the timetable for that help and how can we be sure that the government is taking the actions necessary to achieve the ceasefire so that the help can actually get to the people?

Could we have an explanation of how that is going to be done?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government remains committed to being a humanitarian partner in Libya and to doing at least our share of the international effort there in that regard.

Obviously, delivering humanitarian aid is extremely difficult in some parts of the country under the circumstances, but we continue to work with our international partners, international agencies and others to facilitate passage of that aid.

[Translation]

Hon. Jack Layton (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the most frequent problem with this government, this administration, is a lack of co-operation and transparency when it comes to the cost of operations, such as the operation in Libya.

Can the Prime Minister commit to having his team work with the Standing Committee on National Defence to ensure that the same high degree of transparency and availability of information adopted by some of our allies will also be adopted by this government?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to being as transparent as possible. Clearly, we will work with the House committees or through other mechanisms to ensure that any information that can be made available is made available.

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, peaceful democratic protesters in the Middle East and North Africa have inspired all Canadians. Sadly, in Libya, Gadhafi sent in his army to savagely crush protests.

New Democrats supported the UN's call to protect the people of Libya. However, we know that in the end it will be a diplomatic solution that will end the crisis in Libya.

To that end, I want to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will he be attending the next contact group meeting and reaffirm Canada's support for a Libyan-led political solution?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is tremendously proud of our commitment to freedom, to democracy, to human rights, to the rule of law. Our government is proud of the work that our men and women in uniform are doing in Libya. We want to work to increase our diplomatic efforts to end the violence and to protect civilians and our humanitarian efforts. It is certainly my intention to be at the next Libya contact group meeting.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the motion on Libya deplores the ongoing human rights violations being committed by the Gadhafi regime. Reports show that sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war. Deploring the situation is not enough. We must take action to protect the rights of Libyans.

Will Canada make a tangible commitment to the international community to support the investigation of these crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice?

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, in fact, the Minister of International Cooperation made an announcement in Rome of \$2 million more in humanitarian aid to Libya. Part of that money is going to targeted intervention and assistance programs that will help up to 50,000 women and girls in Libya who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Canadians are expecting is that ministers and cabinet will in fact lead by example, yet at a time when we are seeing lots of announcements about cuts being made to the public service and to the services themselves the Prime Minister has one of the largest cabinets in Canadian history. The ad budget has gone up by 215%. Just before the election the government announced separation packages for its own employees.

What is the story here? Where is the consistency?

Oral Questions

● (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): In fact, Mr. Speaker, a reduction of ministerial budgets is one of the things we have done as part of our efforts to restrain costs. There has been an \$11 million reduction in ministerial budgets this year. That is, of course, over and above the fact that these budgets are lower than they were during the period of the Liberal Party.

In terms of advertising, there was a significant amount of advertising linked to the economic action plan. Obviously, as that is expiring, the advertising budgets will be falling as well.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hard fact remains that he has put a minister in charge of government restraint who is himself responsible for a \$50 million expenditure that he could not explain, that he could not justify, for which there was no documentation, including for gazebos, the paving of roads, whatever it might have been. There was no documentation whatsoever, and that is the minister who is now in charge of helping Canadians to deal with the new economic climate in which we find ourselves.

Again, there is a double standard: one standard for ministers, one standard for—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Of course, Mr. Speaker, I have answered questions on that before and the assertions of the leader of the Liberal Party in this regard are not true.

As I indicated in my previous answer, there have been significant expenditures on this side of the House in terms of reductions of ministers' offices, for example. I would encourage the Liberal Party to join us in this frugality and in cutting that taxpayer-funded subsidy to political parties.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the government has one standard for cabinet, one standard for the Conservatives, one standard for ministers' ridings; then there is another reality for Canadians throughout the country.

The Prime Minister's agenda does not have the necessary credibility because he is proposing one thing for those in power and another for Canada's middle class. This is the problem we have with the Conservative government's approach.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this party's priority is hard-working Canadian families. That has always been our priority on this side of the House. That is the reason why we were elected by the people of Canada, and Canadians want to see that we have credibility, something that the Liberal Party is lacking.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government promised Canadians a magic trick: a painless reduction of the size of government. The real plan is to make major cuts. Yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer expressed his concerns. Other experts have said that these cuts will have serious consequences. The government cannot tell Canadians what it plans on cutting, maybe because it does not even know itself.

Why is the government playing Russian roulette with public services?

[*English*]

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, we have a strong mandate to eliminate the deficit by 2014-15. We intend to do just that. I would just say to the hon. member that when she looks at the complete information, she will find that internal services and capital and personnel costs are part of the operating budgets being reduced and that, in fact, the numbers do add up.

Of course, we are committed to achieving the \$1.8 billion in savings by freezing the operating budgets of the departments and we are in fact on track in doing so.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government could not be less clear, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer was very clear. The government does not have a plan. Sure, it is promising to kill the deficit, but how and what will the consequences be? Ask any premier, doctor, professor, patient or student what happened when the Liberals cut the deficit in the 1990s. It was not pretty.

I have a simple question. Will the minister show us his plan or is he hoping for some Oz wizardry?

● (1430)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the time, it was actually started by our fine Minister of Finance in budget 2011. Some savings were already achieved as a result of our strategic reviews in that regard.

We are on track and we are developing the new plan, the strategic and operating review, which is fully intending to review the spending covering \$80 billion worth of direct program spending.

All of that will be reviewed because we will meet our target and we will meet our promises to the Canadian people. That is why the government is with the Canadian people. They want to see a balanced budget and we do too.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we now know some of the cuts the Prime Minister was planning to make. He was planning on making massive cuts to Environment Canada, human resources and aboriginal affairs. But the worst is the plan to cut 33% of the jobs at Canadian Heritage. What is the government's priority? It would rather invest in prisons.

Why does the government think that prisons are more important than heritage?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely untrue. Canada is the only G8 country that decided not to cut, not to maintain, but to increase its funding for culture.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

I would like to say as well that what we have done over the past years within the Department of Canadian Heritage is reduce the size of the department by 13%, while maintaining our commitment to arts and cultural and Canadian heritage across the country.

We have made the bureaucracy smaller, we have made the department smaller while maintaining our commitment to Canadians and standing up for Canadian culture.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the government's job creation priority, hiring more prison guards?

Let us be serious. In Canada, culture is a multibillion dollar industry. It creates real jobs. It gives hope. It shows Canada at its best. Cutting Heritage Canada by a third is bad cultural policy and bad economics.

How can the minister justify encouraging us to take something away from society rather than make it richer?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): We should read between the lines of his question, Mr. Speaker. What he is saying is make the department bigger, thereby taking funding away from culture. That is not the way to do it.

We believe in supporting culture, not making the bureaucracy bigger. Members opposite have it exactly backward.

By doing what we have done, which is making bureaucracy smaller and making more money available, it makes room available for what we proposed in budget 2011, which is the \$500 per child arts tax credit so that children can get involved in the arts, performing arts, language, so they can participate in Canada's cultural mosaic. That is good culture policy, not NDP policy.

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*[Translation]***G8 SUMMIT**

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that it is scandalous that \$50 million was taken from the border infrastructure fund to fund projects in the riding of the minister hosting the G8 summit. The fact that this same minister is now in charge of the Treasury Board is also scandalous and source of worry for the country's taxpayers. Even more disconcerting is that the minister does not even try to explain his actions.

Can someone at least try to justify these poor choices and finally give us some real answers?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 32 public infrastructure projects were supported. Each of the 32 projects was completed on time. Each of the 32 projects was fully accounted for and every single dollar was spent on public infrastructure.

I do notice that it is not only the President of the Treasury Board who is speaking glowingly about all these public infrastructure projects, I have a news release from a former Liberal MP, Anthony

Rota, saying he is expressing his pleasure with the minister's announcement that the government has approved a funding request for the Jack Garland Airport. How was that funded? Out of the G8 legacy fund.

Even the Liberals are supporting these great public infrastructure projects.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the minister was taking advantage of the money in the border infrastructure fund, the Canada Border Services Agency had to close three posts and reduce hours in order to save money.

Can the President of the Treasury Board—yes, the President of the Treasury Board—tell the Canadians who will be affected by these cuts and who will have to wait in line at customs this summer how the investments in his riding, 300 kilometres from the border, will help reduce congestion? How will that shorten line-ups at the border?

• (1435)

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the government did is use the authority of an existing program to fast-track these public infrastructure projects at the height of the global economic downturn.

These investments were all part of Canada's economic action plan, a plan that has helped to create 560,000 net new jobs.

The member opposite may not be aware, but because of that economic action plan Canada is leading the advanced economies, and because of that economic action plan this Minister of Finance was named the best minister of finance in the world.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board seems incapable of standing in this House and explaining his \$50 million pork spree in Muskoka.

It is so bad that he has friend, the foreign affairs minister claiming that the Muskoka gravy train was developed by public servants. It is simply not true.

The Auditor General's report is clear, and I will quote: Senior officials said "their input had not been sought".

This deal was cooked up by the member from Muskoka. Public servants were deliberately frozen out.

When will the minister take responsibility for his abuse of public trust?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just because the member opposite says something does not mean it is true.

Here is what we did. We supported investments to help Canada host the G8 with infrastructure, resurfacing the runway of an airport, resurfacing a provincial highway, and building the G8 centre which is now a community centre.

Oral Questions

Each of those projects was approved by the minister of infrastructure of the day. Each of those projects came in fully on budget. For each of those projects, there is a full contribution agreement that was negotiated with the municipality. These are all good projects.

The Auditor General gave some advice on better transparency and better clarity and we fully accepted that counsel.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of disturbing elements to this scandal.

First, of course, is the minister's flagrant abuse of the public trust. Second, now that he has been caught, is the way he hides behind the foreign affairs minister.

Given the sheer scale of this dubious spending and the fact that he is in Treasury Board, how can we trust this minister? It is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

Where is the accountability? Where is the transparency?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member for Timmins—James Bay that we should give him a pass on the civility for that question, because it was quite funny.

Here is the reality. We supported 32 public infrastructure projects. Each of them had a negotiated contribution agreement with the local municipality.

The Auditor General has come forward and given us counsel and advice on what we might do better on the intake process for public infrastructure projects and on reporting to Parliament where there could be greater clarity and greater transparency.

We thank the Auditor General for her work and fully accept her recommendations.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am listening but I am not hearing accountability. I am hearing baffle gab.

Since the member from Muskoka cannot stand up and defend his actions, I will turn to his friend and I will ask him why he allowed the minister to cook up this deal to bypass all the checks and balances? Why did he allow \$50 million in border infrastructure to be divvied up by the three amigos, the mayor, the minister and the hotel manager?

Since the member from Muskoka will not apologize to this House, will his friend take responsibility and apologize to the Canadian people for his partner's misuse of public funds?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as to the three individuals the member mentioned, none of these three individuals approved a single project.

All of the projects were approved by the minister of infrastructure, by me. All 32 projects are public infrastructure projects, things like paving provincial highways, constructing a new runway and a community centre. We used the existing authorities under the border infrastructure fund.

The Auditor General has made advice and counsel that we could be more open and more transparent in terms of Parliament. We fully accept the Auditor General's advice and thank her for her good work.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a great sense of anxiety continues to grow across this country as the labour dispute continues with Canada Post.

Business operators, rural residents and seniors are all beginning to feel the pain of this current dispute. We have seen actions taken on both sides that further enhanced that. This can certainly contribute to long-term hurt and long-term pain for the corporation.

I would ask the minister if she has placed a deadline on mediation? If not, will she?

• (1440)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is exactly correct in what he says. We are beginning to see these rolling strikes, and the means by which Canada Post is dealing with these rolling strikes, affect the average Canadian, seniors and business in general.

That is why it is important for us to continue to monitor the situation. We want the parties to reach an agreement as soon as possible. I have written to them. I have met with them separately. The parties should be strongly encouraged to reach a deal on their own accord.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those are fine words, but the reality is that the Canada Post strike is now 11 days old. Today, 15,000 people in Toronto and Montreal are on strike. In addition, Air Canada began striking at midnight. Travel season is upon us. This will have a major impact on the economy, but a negotiated settlement is the preferred solution.

Will the minister take responsibility and require the parties to sit down and negotiate in good faith to come to an agreement? Canadians and Quebeckers need it.

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I briefly indicated, I have met with the parties separately. I have met with the parties together on a number of occasions. I have written the parties directly, asking them to show good faith to the Canadian public to make sure that they are doing the best they can to reach a deal, to be focused on getting a deal, and to make sure that they are looking after the Canadian public's interest.

The obligation is for these two parties to reach a deal. At some point, we have to make sure that the Canadian public's interest is protected.

*Oral Questions***PENSIONS**

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today over 55,000 working Canadians are walking off the job in order to fight for their pensions. Why are they doing this? They know that the Conservative government's inaction is leaving employees and employers to sort the pension crisis out for themselves.

Just like the government failed pensioners at Nortel, pension security is now on the block at Canada Post and Air Canada. Inaction, rhetoric and empty promises are not a plan.

When will the government get serious about helping Canadians plan for their retirement?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are all concerned about the labour disputes that seem to be centred over pensions. Let me assure the hon. member and the House that this government is doing the best it can to make sure that we are protecting those Canadians who actually do not have a pension, and that is many Canadians.

We are putting in place a plan in conjunction with our provincial partners, a pooled registered pension plan that would cover all of those Canadians and provide an opportunity for all of those Canadians who do not have a pension as of this day.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the Auditor General's report that the government has turned a blind eye to first nations, we discover it has an eye on them after all, a covert surveillance operation.

A document entitled "Aboriginal Hot Spots and Public Safety" reveals that INAC, RCMP and CSIS have spied on so-called aboriginal hot spots. It is not about guns and drugs. It is about aboriginal disputes over lands, resources, fisheries and budget shortfalls.

Will this covert surveillance continue despite the newly announced first nations joint action plan?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we respect the right of all Canadians to engage in peaceful protest and we remain committed to ensuring the rights, health and safety of all citizens are respected.

My department does monitor all emergencies, such as floods, fires and civil unrest on an ongoing basis. This facilitates quick support and response as needed to any emergency.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP rationalizes spy operations due to mounting frustrations with unresolved land claims and conflicts over treaty, hunting and fishing rights, environmental impacts, sovereignty issues, and economic and social concerns.

Surely Canadians would agree it is reasonable to be frustrated when their children lack clean drinking water, access to safe schools and decent housing.

When will the government get its priorities straight and focus its efforts on ensuring the well-being of aboriginal peoples?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is illustrative today that we had the native police and the RCMP in a collaborative arrangement called in by the community to take out lawbreakers in the Mohawk communities. This is something that is a real concern and something that we need to do.

We are working collaboratively on all kinds of fronts. That is why we came up with a joint action plan working with the National Chief last week. We are collaborating and we are getting things done.

* * *

● (1445)

[Translation]

ASBESTOS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has spent more than a decade trying to stop asbestos from being placed on the Rotterdam Convention list of hazardous materials. We have now learned that Health Canada informed the government of the dangers associated with asbestos and recommended that this product be added to the list. The Conservatives ignored this advice.

Will this government reconsider and allow asbestos to be added to the Rotterdam Convention list?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, for more than 30 years, Canada has promoted the safe and controlled use of chrysotile at home and abroad. In addition, scientific publications show that chrysotile can be used safely under controlled conditions.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not true.

[English]

This is a simple issue. This is about protecting lives. This is about ensuring materials are used safely.

The Conservatives allowed the exportation of 750,000 tonnes of asbestos in 2006, particularly to the developing world where workers are least protected. One hundred thousand people a year are killed from asbestos.

Will the government finally put lives ahead of politics and allow this deadly product to be listed under the UN's Rotterdam Convention?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, for more than 30 years, Canada has promoted the safe and controlled use of chrysotile at home and abroad. The premier of Quebec himself said, “The government has not changed its mind. It will continue to defend the safe use of chrysotile, a policy that should be defended.”

Earlier, he said, “Quebec promotes the safe use of chrysotile. That is what we do at home and that is what is encouraged throughout the world.”

* * *

[English]

LIBYA

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, following the passing of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973, Canada and its NATO partners took action in Libya to defend the lives of its innocent civilians who found themselves under siege by the regime of Colonel Gadhafi.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs please tell this House what it will take to ensure that Canada's ongoing efforts to protect the people of Libya are successful?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reasons that Parliament voted unanimously back in March to impose sanctions against the Libyan regime and undertake a UN sanctioned mission exist today. We are there to protect the vulnerable civilian population that is under attack by its own government.

We believe the military mission is incredibly important but so too is adding humanitarian support, additional diplomatic measures and, as has been suggested by others in the House, support for good governance from the transitional council.

We will be working closely with the transitional council and ensuring that our men and women in the armed forces have the tools they need to do the job.

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SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is senseless, reckless, hasty and dangerous. Those are some of the words used to describe the decision to close the rescue communication centre in my riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl. Experts, unions, the provincial fisheries minister and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have all spoken out against this indefensible move by the Conservative government.

Will the minister listen to the people of my province and reverse this reckless decision?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the consolidation of the regional dispatch centre into the existing Joint Rescue Coordination Centre will have no negative impact on the current levels of service provided by the Canadian Coast Guard. Safety and response time will not be affected.

This consolidation is due to technological advances and represents a positive change by locating all maritime and air search and rescue coordinations in the same centre working side by side.

● (1450)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister has his speaking notes down pat.

Where are the government's priorities? It finds billions for fighter jets and corporate tax give-aways but then make cuts that jeopardize the safety of Canadians who work off our shores. We have one of the worst search and rescue response times in the world. We should be improving our services, not cutting them.

Will the minister abandon his rash cuts and implement the Wells inquiry recommendations to improve our rescue response times and save lives?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I see that the member opposite has his questions down pat as well.

The fact is that mariners in distress will continue to be serviced by the same lifeboats, the same inshore rescue boats, the same Coast Guard vehicles and the same aircraft from the same present locations. This will have no impact on safety and is a very positive move.

[Translation]

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in response to my colleague from Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine regarding the closure of the search and rescue office in Quebec City, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said that the Halifax centre would be offering the same services as the Quebec City office.

Can the minister explain how those services could possibly remain the same, without any impact on quality, when just last Friday, some people calling the centre in Halifax were not able to receive adequate, prompt service in French?

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have indicated all along that bilingual services will be available. There will be no change in the service provided. The Canadian Coast Guard will ensure that bilingual capacity will be made available at the consolidated joint rescue centres.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this reminds me of Service Canada in the Atlantic provinces.

Quebeckers want services in French. Since this government cannot even ensure that Canadians can have their cases heard in French in the country's highest court, it should come as no surprise that it cannot guarantee French-language services after it closes the search and rescue offices in Quebec City.

Search and rescue means saving lives. Does this government realize that Canadians did not give it a mandate to endanger people's safety?

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thought I was very clear in my answer to the previous question.

The maritime communities across Canada will continue to be served in both official languages by the Coast Guard ships, the Coast Guard auxiliary and the Canadian Forces aircraft. The Canadian Coast Guard will ensure that bilingual capacity exists at all of the joint rescue coordination centres.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government submitted a bogus report to the United Nations claiming that it was reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40 megatonnes every year.

A few weeks later, the government gave Parliament another report stating that reductions were actually 10 times less, or only 4 megatonnes annually.

Why did the government cook the books in its report to the UN?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a gross miscalculation of reality. In fact, the report was accurate. In the year in question, 2009, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 42 megatonnes, which was as result of the economic downturn.

In the separate report to comply with the Kyoto treaty reporting, we also very accurately reported the forecasts and the megatonne emissions.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report to the UN painted such a rosy picture because the government deliberately left out the oil sands. That is a pretty big omission.

Why did the government deliberately try to mislead the UN?

• (1455)

The Speaker: I would caution the member that the term "deliberately mislead" has consistently been found to be unparliamentary.

I see the hon. Minister of the Environment is standing to answer so I will allow him to respond.

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the assumption of the question is absolutely false. We did report, in the document provided to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, precise acknowledgement that in 2009 the oil sands industry contributed precisely 6.5% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the private sector it would be unthinkable to dismantle the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world without at

Oral Questions

least a comprehensive cost benefit analysis, without impact studies to measure the impact on the Prairie communities and without an assessment of liabilities, like broken contracts for ships that are already on order. Some would say that it would even be foolish.

I do not think the minister of agriculture is a fool by any means, an ideological zealot maybe but not a fool. Would he table these analyses to defend his principles if he so believes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of quotes that I think the member opposite would be interested in. One is from Kevin Bender of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. Just recently he said, "...give farmers the freedom to market their wheat and barley crops using whatever sales agent they want".

It is followed by another quote that says, "They have a monopoly. A monopoly has to be regulated or reigned in or it can't be allowed to exist".

Do members know who said that? It was said by the member from Winnipeg Centre.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, obviously, from the minister's answer, he does not have these documents. He has not done even the fundamental research on the impact studies.

Can anyone imagine legislating a multi-billion dollar corporation out of existence without even doing the basic fundamental research? The only sure outcome of this ideological crusade is taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of the pockets of Prairie grain producers and putting it into the pockets of the shareholders, of the very robber barons who used to gouge them for a century until we created the Canadian Wheat Board.

if the minister has evidence that it is a good deal, why will he not table it here in the House?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best way is to move past these partisan attacks, get the politics out of this and actually talk about the people involved in the industry.

When he talks about a cost benefit analysis, Phil de Kemp of the Malting Industry of Canada said, "The Malting Industry of Canada would like to extend our support for your government's announced plans to begin the legislative process to allow for the marketing choice of barley via the removal of the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board".

The Malting Industry is saying that it will enjoy being able to market its malt barley and actually do it in a more fulsome way.

We know that all of the processing sectors, whether it is a flour mill or a pasta plant, have moved south of the border simply because they cannot do it in Canada. That has to change.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightly outraged. Yesterday, the federal court ordered the Minister of Public Safety to review his decision to deny the transfer of Alexie Randhawa to serve his sentence in Canada. This individual was found with 107 kilograms of cocaine in his vehicle, probably destined for North American youth.

Would the Minister of Public Safety please tell the House what our Conservative government is doing to ensure that dangerous criminals who are serving their sentence in the country where they committed their crimes are not sent to Canada?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on any individual case. However, it is important to be very clear. Canadians who commit crimes abroad run the risk of facing justice abroad. Our government tabled legislation in the last Parliament to ensure that Canadians are kept safe from international offenders. Shockingly, the NDP voted to gut the bill, even going so far as to attempt to remove every reference to "protecting victims".

Law-abiding Canadians can be reassured that we will reintroduce this legislation as soon as possible and, unlike the NDP, we will put the rights of victims ahead of criminals.

* * *

● (1500)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a disturbing pattern of the government abandoning Canadians in difficulty abroad.

Henk Tepper, a New Brunswick potato farmer, has been in a Lebanese prison for almost three months following a commercial dispute. Mr. Tepper's wife and young children say that they have heard nothing but dead air from this government. They have received no information.

It is unacceptable for the government to abandon Canadians in circumstances as difficult as Mr. Tepper's. When will the government intervene with Lebanese authorities, have Mr. Tepper released from the prison in Lebanon and brought back to Canada?

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his courtesy in letting me know he would be raising this issue. I also thank him for the opportunity to set the record straight.

In fact, Mr. Tepper and his family have been given substantial, vigorous and active assistance since the time he was arrested. There have been regular visits and there has been regular contact with Mr. Tepper, his family and his lawyers to give all possible assistance.

* * *

[Translation]

SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in order to allow young people in Lavaltrie to play sports and the secondary school to develop a sports education program, the town needs a sports complex. The Conservatives told us that the regions were their priority. Regional development is also my priority.

Will the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities agree to review the request for funding for this project, which will help the economic and social development of Lavaltrie and the surrounding area?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the hon. member.

The Government of Canada is always very interested in every region of the country and, of course, every region of Quebec. It is a region I know very well, having played a lot of sports there myself. However, as the hon. member knows, the province of Quebec has to give priority to each infrastructure project in the province of Quebec. If the province gives priority to this specific project, then we will see what happens at the federal level. We will be pleased to help this beautiful region.

* * *

[English]

AIR CANADA

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, late last night 3,800 Air Canada customer service and ticket agents went on strike. Canadians are worried about the effect this will have on our economy.

Could the Minister of Labour please advise the House of the government's intentions to respond to this strike?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague from the great fortress of Conservative Toronto.

As the member indicated, we are concerned by the effect this strike will have on our economic recovery, which is still fragile, and on Canadians in general. Canadians gave us a strong mandate to complete our economic recovery. That is why we will put on notice tonight legislation to ensure continuing air service for passengers.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is something the Conservatives never talk about in their budget. Since they took power, a 30% increase in food bank use in the country has been rising and 904,000 Canadians used a food bank last year. What is most despicable is that over 200 veterans, a fourfold increase, in the city of Calgary, where the Prime Minister comes from, use a food bank strictly for veterans.

How can the government brag about its budget when the heroes of our country have to go begging for food in the richest city in our country?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to wish the member well in his position. I appreciate his concern for our veterans.

One veteran in the street is one veteran too many. That is why this government, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, has undertaken the largest initiative to help our homeless veterans in three cities: Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. That is why we have been helping more than 100 veterans and why we also are staying the course and ensuring we take care of our veterans all over the country.

* * *

• (1505)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since coming to power, the Conservatives have been using the Senate to reward their friends and cronies and often to delay or even defeat bills passed by duly elected MPs. Instead of proposing simply to abolish the Senate, the Prime Minister is instead insisting on a piecemeal, unilateral reform of that institution.

Since the Government of Quebec intends to turn to the courts to block these bills if it is not consulted, will the Prime Minister put an end to this obsession with unilaterally reforming the Senate?

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we believe the Senate must change in order to reach its full potential as an accountable and democratic institution. As we have always said, we are not interested in opening up the Constitution. Canadians do not want drawn-out constitutional fights. That is why our government will be proceeding with Senate reform that is reasonable and within the authority of Parliament.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

LIBYA

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: When oral question period began, the period for questions and comments after the speech by the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue was about to begin.

[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member to the House. It is my understanding that she has served a few years in the Canadian armed forces and I thank her for that service to Canada. I look forward to working with her on the national defence committee when we get organized next week.

In her presentation to the House, she talked about all the horrors that had occurred in Libya because of Colonel Gadhafi. She mentioned all the murders that had taken place and how he had attacked people demonstrating in the streets against his regime. She also talked about Colonel Gadhafi using rape as a weapon against his citizens and about the use of his air force to bomb civilian places.

Government Orders

Does the hon. member believe Colonel Gadhafi should maintain his role as the leader of Libya, or do we need to get him out and replace his government?

• (1510)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. Conservative colleague for the question.

I do not think my opinion really matters. What is important is that the people of Libya decide for themselves what should happen to Colonel Gadhafi. Libyans have the power and the intelligence to decide and to take action to ensure that he no longer leads the country.

It is really up to the people of Libya to take control of their future. It is not up to the Canadian Forces or Canada to ask that. It is up to the people of Libya to decide what they want, and I believe they are intelligent enough to make the decisions needed in order to win back their freedom and regain a comfortable way of life in their own country.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue on her very fine speech on this extremely important issue to Canadians. I also note, for the record, that the member has served in the Canadian Forces and, through her knowledge, has been able to give a very detailed presentation of what is going on in Libya from that perspective as well.

Could she also elaborate on another aspect of this motion before us today, and that is a series of amendments that have been put forth by the official opposition? Why does she think it is necessary to have these amendments in order to have a proper resolution, reflecting the will of our party and the will of Canadians?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the proposed amendments to the motion are important because our Canadian Forces personnel deserve clear answers to their questions. Being in a country at war and being fired upon might naturally lead one to question why we are there. The amendments proposed by the Leader of the Opposition clearly state that the objective is to protect civilians. So there we have one answer to one of our soldiers' questions. They know they are there to protect civilians; that is very clear.

They are also wondering why we are there and exactly what we are doing there. Once again, the amendments proposed by the Leader of the Opposition are very clear: we are there to increase humanitarian aid.

[English]

I will read it in English. It states:

—the House supports an increase in Canada's humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis and efforts to strengthen Canada's support for the diplomatic efforts outlined in UNSCR 1973 to reach a ceasefire leading to a Libyan-led political transition, and supports the government's commitment to not deploy Canadian ground troops.

Government Orders

[Translation]

With that, Canadian soldiers know exactly how things are going to work. Thus, the amendments give two very clear answers to our soldiers, who need to know before being deployed to Libya exactly why they are there and what will happen.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in the debate on the motion by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Canadian role in Libya.

Canada's armed forces are helping protect the civilian population in Libya from violence at the hands of the Gadhafi regime. Our actions in Libya are part of a NATO-led mission authorized by United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973. The House of Commons unanimously voted for sanctions and to endorse military action. The conditions that prompted these actions still exist.

The Gadhafi regime has continually shown no regard for human rights and has refused to abide by its own international humanitarian and legal obligations. It has chosen to wage war against its own people, including alleged acts of sexual violence and the use of rape as a weapon of war to further the regime's military goals. For that reason, it is our Conservative government's position that Canada's role in Libya must continue alongside our NATO partners in the timeframe set out by the alliance, which is the reason we are debating this motion today.

NATO leaders have said that a 90-day extension is currently required to effect change in Libya and we have agreed with that assessment. Canada has and will continue to work closely with its international and regional partners, such as the United Nations, the Arab League, the African Union and NATO, to ensure that peace and security are brought to the people of Libya.

As the minister for the Status of Women and a female member of Parliament in a freely elected House of Commons, I wish to address the serious allegation that the Gadhafi regime is using rape, fear of rape and other forms of sexual violence against the Libyan population.

Given the chaotic situation in western Libya and the stigma attached to reporting rape in Libya, it is difficult to know exactly what is going on at this time, but we are learning more every day. The investigation by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court indicated on June 8 that the prosecutor has significant evidence that Gadhafi is using rape as a weapon against the Libyan population. The prosecutor, therefore, is considering adding rape to the serious charges against Gadhafi and his relatives.

We have all heard reports on the case of Ms. Imam al-Obeidi, who was abducted and subsequently detained while attempting to tell a group of foreign journalists in March that she had been tortured and gang raped by 15 members of Gadhafi's forces. Allegations of attacks such as those against Ms. al-Obeidi must be investigated. Torture and the widespread and systematic use of rape against the population are not only serious violations of international law but are abhorrent and unacceptable.

I would like to focus the rest of my comments on the broader perspective for women and girls.

The specific experience of women and girls in armed conflict is often linked to their status in society. We know that when women and girls thrive, the whole of society benefits. So empowering women and girls can help to promote peace and progress for all.

The use of sexual violence as a tool of war devastates societies in ways that few weapons can. It ravages families and communities. It is wrong, it is immoral, it is abhorrent. In these contexts, sexual violence can be a war crime or a crime against humanity.

Countries around the world came together at the 1995 the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and agreed that, "While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society as well as their sex".

Where violence and discrimination against women and girls exist prior to conflict, they get worse during conflict. That is why our government is taking action. Today in Rome, the Minister of International Cooperation announced, among other measures, help for up to 50,000 women and girls in Libya who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

We must work to promote equality between women and men and ensure that the differential impact of conflict on women and girls is recognized and addressed through every phase of war and peace. To ensure that this happens, it is important that women be included in the peace process and that they be given the training and support they need to participate meaningfully.

In October of 2010, Canada unveiled its action plan on women, peace and security. This national action plan will help us focus and coordinate the implementation of our commitments and will increase the effectiveness of our response to ensure the systematic integration of the concerns and experiences of women and girls in conflict situations.

● (1515)

This principle of equality through all stages of conflict and peace is the key to the development of stable countries built on a foundation of human rights and the rule of law.

Our national action plan will guide the way Canada develops policy and how we select, train and deploy Canadian personnel and ensure they have the right knowledge and guidance for implementing Canadian policies effectively in the field. It will steer Canada's interventions abroad so they encourage the participation of women and girls, promote their rights and advance their equal access to humanitarian and development assistance.

Government Orders

It is in specific debates such as on this motion that national action plans are essential, and I applaud our government for its proactive position on this topic. Canada has a long history of supporting the rights and well-being of women and girls in situations of conflict, as reflected in our ongoing active implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. We have also taken action through international programming to address sexual violence, to support civil society and to strengthen international criminal justice mechanisms.

Our government understands that work has to be undertaken in a number of areas to advance women's human rights and equality internationally. That is why we are proud that the Prime Minister is leading international efforts to improve the health and save the lives of mothers and children in some of the world's poorest countries by targeting the leading causes of mortality in mothers and children in vulnerable countries. These new initiatives will support comprehensive and integrated approaches to provide much-needed health services for mothers and children.

It was in this spirit that I spearheaded the recent successful all-party House of Commons initiative in the last parliament of Canada to lead a United Nations resolution proclaiming September 22 as an international day of the girl, a resolution supported by all parties of this chamber, recognized as key to advancing equality for girls throughout the world.

Canadians understand that when girls have a solid foundation in life with the best skills and living conditions, they can truly blossom, grow and join in building a stronger world. The international day of the girl will galvanize worldwide enthusiasm for these goals, helping to raise global awareness of the unique challenges facing girls, as well as their tremendous potential.

“Girls' Rights Matter“ was Canada's theme for International Women's Week this year, because we know that when girls know their rights, they are more likely to exercise them in ways that will benefit themselves, their families and their communities.

The promotion of human rights and the equality of women and men, boys and girls, will continue to be important priorities of Canada's foreign and aid policies. It is based on a belief that equal rights for women and girls are an essential and inherent component of progress on overall human rights and democratic development, and that sustainable and equitable development will only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal partners and decision-makers in the sustainable development of their societies.

Consequently, Canada has continuously promoted the integration and mainstreaming of gender analysis in the work of all international fora, including such multilateral organizations as the United Nations, the OECD, the Commonwealth, La francophonie and the OAS.

Canada has played a key role in bringing issues such as violence against women, women's rights as human rights, and national machinery for the advancement of women, and women in decision-making to the forefront of international discussion.

We have condemned the stoning of women in Afghanistan, spoken out against honour-motivated violence and condemned all forms of violence against women and girls worldwide.

Our government is also committed to addressing violence against women and girls in Canada. As members know, in the recent Speech from the Throne, we committed to taking action to address the problem of violence against women and girls.

Our government has no more fundamental duty than to protect the personal safety of our citizens. It takes this responsibility very seriously. We will continue to protect the most vulnerable in society and work to prevent crime. Violence against women affects us all. It destroys families, and weakens the fabric of our society.

I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to ensuring fair, equitable and respectful treatment of all citizens, and to taking further action against acts of violence against women and girls at home and around the world.

• (1520)

Over the last year I have met with women and girls from around the world. I have heard their struggles to access education and to live free from hunger, disease and violence.

We must be vigilant and stand steadfastly to ensure that women have the respect and dignity they are entitled to as human beings.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her speech. I agree with most of what she had to say, especially in regard to the totally wanton, disgusting violence committed by Gadhafi's troops against women and girls in Libya.

[*English*]

We all know that the UN mandated NATO-led mission has three objectives: an end to all attacks against civilians, verifiable withdrawal of the regime's military and paramilitary forces to bases, and full and unhindered access to humanitarian aid for all of those who need it across Libya.

The NDP's position is clear. We support the clear UN mandate to protect civilians in Libya from government attacks and to negotiate a ceasefire. However, we have concerns about mission creep and want to see the government do more on the diplomatic and humanitarian assistance fronts.

Can the minister address those concerns about the mission?

Government Orders

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I think all members appreciate that while our men and women in uniform are doing very difficult work in Libya, our civilians and public servants and diplomats will be doing just as difficult work post-conflict in Libya. That is why it is important to highlight something as crucial as the announcement by the Minister of International Cooperation today. As we know, she announced additional emergency assistance for up to 780,000 affected people in Libya, as well as those who have fled to neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt and, very importantly, help for up to 50,000 women and girls in Libya who have experienced or at risk of experiencing gender-based violence. Canada has already provided, in response, food for 1 million displaced Libyans, tents and supplies for 90,000 Libyans, as well as medical supplies and care.

We continue to work with our international partners to monitor the humanitarian situation as it develops. Of course, I agree with the member opposite that the humanitarian side of this conflict is one that we will all continue to watch with extreme concern, particularly the impact on women and girls.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for her work on the advancement of equality. The stories of rape as an instrument of war are troubling to us all.

I think the one item that is of the greatest concern to Canadians is the one that was actually identified in the last question, that of mission creep. When we hear of these atrocities, it strikes me that it will be most difficult to eliminate them within the present mandate and I wonder if it is not regime change that we are really talking about here.

Is it realistic to expect to put an end to these atrocities within the UN mandate or is this really about something bigger?

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I think it is realistic to recognize that these horrific acts of violence are occurring. I think it is important that we have raised this issue in the motion and are debating it in the House of Commons and that it has been raised at the highest levels.

In past conflicts, issues like the use of rape as a tool of war were ignored and not recognized by some countries. Canada is taking a leadership role in this matter, as we have done in the past.

As the members know, we have continued to support the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 that was adopted in the year 2000. It was a very important resolution to ensure that violence against women and girls is considered unquestionably as unacceptable, and we will continue through this resolution to support and implement meaningful measures such as the action plan the Minister of Foreign Affairs put in place in October. This is to ensure not only that we improve the safety and justice for women and girls around the world who are affected by violence during conflict but also after conflict. We also have to ensure that women are part of the peace-making process once this conflict is over.

• (1530)

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her contribution to the debate today and all members for this important debate on Libya.

As members know, we have heard discussion of how Canada responded quickly by moving to Malta when we had to evacuate citizens out of the conflict zone. We moved quickly to help protect Libyan citizens. We have forces there now, on the water, and our air force is working out of Italy to help take out Libyan forces that are attacking their own civilians.

The minister focused her remarks on humanitarian aid. I understand that over \$8 million in aid has already gone into the area and another \$2 million was announced just recently. The minister was talking about the serious issue related to violence against women in the conflict zone.

I understand that of the aid that was recently announced, tens of thousands of dollars would be going toward the victims of rape and sexual violence. There is aid available to train people to help provide counselling and so on.

Could the minister tell us how the money that has been provided is going to assist people at risk from the outrageous acts against women in the conflict zone?

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, Canada is taking a leadership role in this matter. It is important that all countries act in the same manner. I am very proud that Canada has recognized not only these despicable actions but has acted very quickly to offer emergency assistance to these victims.

Today, the Minister of International Cooperation has announced additional assistance that will help up to 50,000 women and girls in Libya who have either already experienced or are at risk of experiencing sexual violence. We can only imagine the horror as this conflict unfolds, and the fear that women and girls are experiencing.

Sending a message like this from a free, democratic and just country like Canada to the people of Libya is an important message. We want the women in Libya to know that Canada stands behind them and we will do what we can to support them in this very difficult time.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the minister for her comments, particularly around UN resolutions 1325 and 1888. In fact, on this side of the House we did commend the government for its action plan on resolution 1325. We believe that is something that should be front and centre in Canada's role in the world.

Is the minister part of a coordinating group in her role for Status of Women to ensure that this is an action plan that will be further resourced? Clearly, this action plan needs to be animated. The Department of Foreign Affairs did an excellent job in briefing members when they asked for the action plan. Are there further plans to ensure that this action plan will be continuing?

It is not just a one-off, if you will, when it comes to Libya. It is enacted not only overseas but here in Canada as well.

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member and I thank his party for supporting our government's action plan to support resolution 1325.

Government Orders

The action plan responded to a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions on the subject of women, peace and security. Together these resolutions confirm the need to account for equality between women and men in all stages of conflict, prevention and resolution.

I can assure the member that this action plan is very much alive and ongoing. As we speak, our action plan guides the way that Canada develops our policy. It helps us select, train and deploy Canadian personnel. It ensures that we have the right knowledge and guidance for implementing Canadian policies effectively in the field. I know that it will steer our interventions abroad, so that they encourage the participation of women and girls, promote their rights and advance their equal access to humanitarian and development assistance.

We will continue to be guided by this resolution and I thank the member for his support of our action plan.

• (1535)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak in the House today on this important motion.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with a very distinguished member of the House, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

[*Translation*]

I would like to start by thanking the voters of Beauséjour, New Brunswick. This is the first opportunity I have had to take the floor in the new Parliament. It is the fifth time that the voters of Beauséjour have placed their confidence in me, and I would therefore like to thank them very much and say I will serve them to the best of my ability for the next four years.

I would also like to tell the House, as my colleagues from Cape Breton—Canso and Toronto Centre did before me, that we will support the motion brought forward by the government and amended by the NDP, with an amendment to the amendment from my colleague from Toronto Centre.

[*English*]

It is important also to note that this action in Libya, where Canadian Forces are participating in a robust and important way, has been authorized by the United Nations. Colleagues in previous comments have referred to the two specific resolutions, resolutions 1970 and 1973, which have authorized military action in support of protecting civilians, ensuring that aid is able to reach those affected by this devastating crisis, and to ensure that the regime of Colonel Gadhafi is not able to use aircraft or helicopter gunships, or other heavy weapons to attack Libya's unarmed civilian population.

[*Translation*]

Last March 17, the United Nations imposed a no-fly zone over Libya by adopting resolution 1973.

The Parliament of Canada approved Canadian participation on March 21. Our participation was unanimously approved by Parliament before the last federal election.

NATO has decided now to extend the mission until September 22, 2011.

[*English*]

It is also important to indicate our party's support, and my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood will elaborate on that in his incisive comments in a few minutes, for the men and women of the Canadian Forces, who are doing, as they always do, a terrific job in very difficult circumstances.

From a foreign policy perspective, the member for Toronto Centre correctly articulated the Liberal Party's view that we should broaden Canada's role not only in Libya but in other struggling democracies in that region.

I thought the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his comments, that began this debate today, was correct to recognize in a formal way the Libyan national transitional council, and its important work not only in Benghazi, but in attempting to build democratic and state institutions that will be available to the people of Libya when and if there is a change of government.

Canada, from our perspective, can play a broader role. We certainly supported the government's decision to recognize this representative institution of the people of Libya. But we also applauded and were encouraged by the government's announcement that it will increase humanitarian aid by \$2 million. It is a good beginning.

From our perspective, the focus cannot only be on military action. The effective work of our diplomats, our non-governmental organizations and development agencies, obviously the Canadian International Development Agency, can play a critical role in protecting the people of the great country of Libya. They can also help the people of Libya build the capacity necessary and the institutions necessary to ensure that a fledgling democracy is able to take hold and state institutions develop in a way that can be long-lasting and durable in a part of the world that unfortunately has often seen armed conflict at a time when democracy would have offered such a positive and progressive alternative to those countries.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

This morning the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced a \$2 million increase in Canada's humanitarian assistance as well as our official recognition of the Libyan national council as the legitimate representative of the people of Libya. We applaud him for that. We think it is an important start. As I said, Canada has a long tradition of supporting democracies embarking on this stage in the civil life of a country, even though it is often difficult.

[*English*]

If anybody doubted that we live in an unstable world, the events of this spring in that part of the world, the Middle East, now known as the Arab spring, I think have reminded us of the role that the international community can play.

Government Orders

I think that this House has come together, as we have today, to support not only the work done by the women and men who serve in our armed forces but also the work done by our diplomats, the work done by the very impressive women and men who serve in our Department of Foreign Affairs, who work in the Canadian International Development Agency, and the thousands of others who work in non-governmental organizations.

[*Translation*]

There are also the experts in constitutional law. It is difficult to set up a federal system in areas of the world that have scarcely known anything other than conflict. Political scientists and professors of international law have helped build a democratic future in several countries in Libya's neighbourhood, the Middle East. The government should continue to show much greater openness toward efforts of this kind and not just focus on our military contribution, although it is important and authorized by the United Nations. We think that Canada can make a greater, more lasting contribution by supporting these efforts.

[*English*]

I will conclude by saying that the Liberal Party is very proud of the role that Canada has played in developing democratic institutions, and supporting and protecting people facing very serious human rights challenges.

I think all of us were appalled when we saw, in February, some of the savage and brutal attacks inflicted by Colonel Gadhafi's regime on unarmed populations, when we had peaceful protests in countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, when people were expressing their desire to choose their own future, to elect the people who will govern their country, who will rule their country in the spirit of respect for the rule of law, of human rights, and for the rights of women who so often are brutalized by those very regimes that were seeking to put an end to the peaceful protests. When we saw that brutality, I think everybody agreed in this House, and in Canada, as we did in March, that we had a role to play.

We began with a military role. We sent HMCS *Charlottetown*, some air force personnel and some support personnel and, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, we did a great job. I think nobody doubts our contribution militarily.

However, the time has come now for the government, for this House, and I hope for the foreign affairs committee of this House, to look at what additional steps we can take, in terms of governance, capacity-building, respecting the rights of women, and ensuring that the International Criminal Court is able to bring those responsible for these massacres to justice. This was a Canadian invention. We should continue to support multilateral institutions like that in helping the Libyan people on their path to democracy and freedom.

• (1545)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Liberal Party for his intervention. I look forward to working with him on the foreign affairs committee.

One of the issues that needs to be addressed, of course, is who we work with on the ground. It is important to look to the national transitional council, the NTC, and that has been brought up in an

amendment today, because we need to have partners to work with in the days and months ahead.

I just want to get a read from him on the importance of actually having a connection to deal with the governance question. We had presented an amendment today to ensure that there was support for that. However, does the member see this as something that we have to continue to push for, not just in this debate today and the next couple of months but actually something we have to commit to for the next couple of years, in fact?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I also look forward to working with the member and our colleagues on the foreign affairs committee. I am encouraged that our first meeting will be this week. My hope is that the committee can work on exactly that issue. The member for Ottawa Centre has said it very well. Increasing governance assistance, capacity building, a democratic institution and a building assistance require a reliable partner.

There has been a lot of confusion about the nomenclature of the National Transitional Council. Often when we are translating from a different language, the names get confusing. From our perspective, this is a good start. The government's decision to recognize that council today and engage in direct and, we hope, robust talks with its members will be important.

However, I agree with the member that this is not something that can end in September. That level of assistance and that principle should extend for many more months if we are to do the job properly.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a lot of discussion today has been around a post-Gadhafi regime and there is no absolute assurance that there will be a post-Gadhafi regime.

Has he actually turned his thinking as to what would be the consequence of being unable to remove, isolate or eliminate Gadhafi in any kind of way, so the situation could possibly be that three months from now we would still be talking about the same thing?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood identifies one of the fundamental difficulties in this discussion. While the United Nations resolution does not authorize or encourage regime change, it is increasingly clear, and I think foreign ministers from G8 countries and others have recognized this, that the continuation of a dictator as brutal and as clearly disrespectful of human rights as Colonel Gadhafi is not something that can be contemplated if we are to succeed in achieving the kind of change we need in Libya.

However, I would make it clear that Gadhafi has been indicted now by the International Criminal Court, so the idea now that he could somehow go into retirement in some other country is not an option. He needs to face the consequences for the brutal and horrible acts he has perpetrated on innocent civilians and women in his country. Within the respect of the rule of law, we have to do what we can to ensure Gadhafi faces consequences for those horrible acts he has perpetrated on innocent civilians.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's speech.

I am worried about seeing the mission expand without any real parameters. Everyone here is stressing the importance of diplomacy and humanitarian aid. Does the hon. member for Beauséjour believe that the motion, as it stands, sufficiently covers the two aspects of diplomacy and humanitarian aid?

• (1550)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Gatineau for her very pertinent question.

I share her concerns. I think the motion recognizes the importance of a balanced commitment, but I hope that, with the members of her party and others on the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, we will be able to ensure that development and diplomacy remain just as important as military attacks.

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this important debate.

It seems like there is a great deal of consensus in the House with respect to moving forward for the next three and a half months. I am pleased to see the government has responded positively to both the NDP and the Liberal amendments.

I hope at the end of the next three and a half months the facts on the ground will have changed and Libyans can contemplate a better life than what they have been subject to for the last number of months. Let us hope, for all of us, but especially for the Libyans, that we are not back debating this again three and a half months from now with a similar egregious situation in Libya.

I would like to note that there is an extreme reluctance by Canadians to be engaged in yet another conflict. I think that is pretty clear from a lot of conversations we had during the election, that we had done our bit in Afghanistan and they did not want to be involved in other conflicts. The real question here is this. What is the exit strategy and what is the end game?

The question I pose in the course of my remarks is, what now? I want to frame this as a critique rather than a criticism of the government. Certainly no critique is necessarily a criticism, but the critique is based upon the doctrine of the responsibility to protect.

It is quite easy to get into these missions. It is far more difficult to get out. Ironically, the very success of the military mission to date raises the very question of, what now? A well thought out responsibility to protect might well be something of a road map, more than we have heard from to date.

Mr. Gadhafi is trapped and barring some Houdini-like exercise, this will be the end of his tyrannical regime. What now? What are the initiatives the government has taken, or will take, in order to return Libya to some level of stability? Will Canada be involved in aid or for governance issues? If so, how? What is our level of contact with the Benghazi council? Who is spearheading these contacts? What do we hope to achieve?

The military mission has been brilliant and its success to date is in no small measure due to the men and women who honour us greatly by wearing the Canadian uniform and, indeed, as well to Lieutenant-General Bouchard's performance as the NATO commander. The "now what" question is still top of mind for many Canadians and hence the amendment put forward by the member for Toronto Centre, which I hope will enjoy the support of the House.

The genesis of the responsibility to protect is the phrase, "never again". We have, in our lifetime, seen genocide perpetrated on host populations. Rwanda comes to mind immediately. We have seen the Holocaust in Germany. We have seen what was happening in Serbia. The international community came together and said, "never again".

At the core of the international community's responsibility is to take timely and decisive actions where the state has manifestly failed to protect its population, and clearly those were the facts on the ground in Libya when we decided to pass the motion: that is the no-fly zone, the arms embargo, targeted sanctions, humanitarian assistance, et cetera. These can all play a very effective role in the short term. However, as all armed conflicts do come to an end, the real question is, okay, what now? What measures need to be taken?

I was particularly struck by an article by the World Federalist Movement dated yesterday, which set out a number of points to be considered by this Parliament, and I thought it was quite useful to talk about those.

The first issue was ambiguous goals. We seem to be moving from protecting civilians to eliminating Mr. Gadhafi. That is known as mission creep and contains its own seeds of destruction. We need to be extraordinarily careful about that kind of issue.

• (1555)

With respect to potential oversight, clearly NATO is best suited to do the military operation, but it lacks a mandate and possibly the ability to conduct a multi-faceted political strategy. Canada could actually be useful if it chooses to do so, and it would be interesting to hear from the government as to how it does wish to be involved in a multi-faceted political strategy.

As to strategy on the fly, bombing is not a strategy. It is wishful thinking to think that Mr. Gadhafi will be taken out by a lucky bomb or will run out of money, or ammunition or fuel. Canada should be promoting a de-escalation of the conflict and facilitating the rebuilding process once the conflict ends.

With respect to the disproportionate use of force, in my view, NATO has been very studious in its application of force and it has adhered slavishly, in my judgment, to the responsibility to protect doctrine, and its intervention is largely justified and consistent with that doctrine to date.

Government Orders

Although the Liberal Party continues to support the implementation of resolutions 1970 and 1973, we, like most Canadians, want to see a clear road map which addresses the questions we have been asking. The road map must include not only the military goals, but also diplomatic, humanitarian and post-conflict goals.

The extension of the mission should not be seen as a free pass. Parliamentarians should be given the opportunity to revisit the mission and discuss the progress being made.

I want to compliment all of my colleagues in the House today. I have sat here for some but not all of the debate and it has been at a very high level and it has been very civilized. In some measure, the government should take note of the quality of debate today as it strives to represent the wishes of Canadians.

When we do revisit this mission in September, there are some benchmarks that should be useful to evaluate our contributions. I would hope, as would everyone here, that we do not have to do this again in September, but the greater likelihood is that we will have to revisit this mission.

The first issue would be civilian protection. Canada should strive to closely adhere to the Security Council's resolution, which tasks NATO with protecting civilian lives. Protecting civilian lives is why Canada is included in the mission and it should remain the top objective.

Second, it should be supporting diplomacy. The mission in Libya will hopefully come to an end sooner rather than later and measures should be in place to transition to democracy. This cannot be done with bombs and embargoes, but rather through genuine political dialogue.

The third is humanitarian relief. The conflict in Libya has created a humanitarian crisis within that country, which left unaddressed would only lead to further conflict. Coordinating food, shelter and medical supplies should be a priority in this conflict-ridden country.

The fourth is the post-conflict peace operations. A discussion over what Canada's role in post-conflict Libya should be should occur and a clear plan be put in place.

The fifth is human rights and international criminal responsibility. Canada should provide the necessary support to enable adherence to human rights norms.

Using these benchmarks will aid in creating a more stable and secure Libya when the conflict has ended.

My party will be supporting the amended resolution, but I suggest that civil protection, supporting diplomacy, human rights and international criminal responsibility should be the benchmarks to measure our success, and this may well then turn out to be a successful R2P, responsibility to protect, mission.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to congratulate the member on his appointment as defence critic for the Liberal Party. Having worked with him in the previous Parliament on various bills and initiatives, I know he will do a good job in his new role.

I want to touch on two quick issues and get the member's take on them.

The first is the issue of Libyan students who are stranded in Canada and the need to support them. We have not talked about that yet today. We have pushed this issue with the government to ensure that the students who are stranded here get support. There have been some challenges in getting in touch with these students, but we need to ensure there is some flexibility in the sanctions so they can actually get support.

There is also the issue around those refugees who are migrant workers. We have asked that there be support for them as well, because they are in a difficult situation. They are stranded and almost without any opportunity to receive support other than through UN relief.

Could I have the member's take on these two issues?

• (1600)

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I, too, congratulate the member on his re-election and his re-appointment as foreign affairs critic.

There are two questions, one with respect to the students and one with respect to Libyans generally in this country. There is a concern that some are being intimidated, hence, part of our amendment addressed that issue. In the event that there is intimidation or anything else going on with respect to Libyans living in our country, the government should take a proactive role in addressing that.

With respect to the students, if there is a need for support while their support is being cut off from back home, the government needs to address that as well. It may be that there are specific instances where the Minister of Immigration needs to address that issue.

With respect to migrants, I have seen the television images and they are in an extraordinarily difficult situation and they do need relief.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Scarborough—Guildwood for his contributions to the discussion today. I know, as a long-serving member of the House, his opinions are appreciated around here. However, I do find a little inconsistency in some of his remarks that I wanted to draw to his attention and ask him about.

He mentioned in his remarks that bombing is not a strategy. He called it perhaps wishful thinking that we might actually take out Mr. Gadhafi with a lucky strike. Of course, the focus of the mission is not for a regime change but for the valued role that our forces are playing in protecting civilians.

The member went on to say that protecting civilians should be the focus of the mission. I would ask the member to reflect on the valued role of our armed forces in responding to the no fly zone, in helping to take out the armed forces that were headed to Benghazi and that mined the harbour in Misrata. Our armed forces are out there clearing the harbour so relief can get into Misrata and also taking away the capacity of Mr. Gadhafi's regime to harm his own citizens.

I would ask him to perhaps reflect on the importance of the role of our Canadian armed forces.

Government Orders

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I thought I did reflect in my speech on the role of our armed forces, which I thought has been absolutely brilliant, as has been the work of Lieutenant-General Bouchard. However, I do not think that is the point. Maybe I was not clear enough but possibly the hon. member did not understand what I was directing my concern to.

Bombing is not a strategy. Bombing is a tactic. The overall goal of the mission is protection of civilians. If we could do it without bombing, that would be good. That would be the strategy. Our various tactics are embargos, humanitarian relief and, indeed, bombing. When I say that bombing is not a strategy but a tactic, hopefully that will clarify the confusion in the hon. member's mind. We are not there to bomb anybody into oblivion. We want the Libyan people to be successful and prosperous.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time on my feet in the 41st Parliament, I will take a moment to thank the great people of Edmonton Centre for trusting me for the third time to be their member of Parliament. I, and we, will not let them down.

I also thank my wife Judy, our children, Jennifer and Robb, and our son-in-law, Jeff for their love and support. I give a special thanks to our 15-month old grandson, Tyler, for being such a little trooper on election night and making his grandpa look good, as good as possible anyway.

Finally, none of us would be here without the hard work and dedication of great volunteers. I was certainly blessed with such a group. None of us would be here without people like that, and I thank them all very much.

Before I go on, let me just say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Nanaimo—Alberni.

It is my pleasure to take part in this important debate on Canada's contribution to the NATO campaign in Libya. I believe that we can all be proud that Canada is at the forefront of an international response to the crises in Libya.

The leadership that Canada continues to demonstrate on the international stage is truly impressive. Increasingly we are positioning ourselves as a go-to country, a country ever more committed to defending human rights and democratic values, a country ever more committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with its allies and partners and a country with the capacity to act.

For three months, Canada has been making critical whole of government contributions to the enforcement of United Nations Security Council resolution 1973. We are helping the international community protect Libyan civilians under threat of attack by a brutal regime. We are effectively enforcing the arms embargo and a no-fly zone over Libya.

The Canadian Forces have been a key component of Canada's engagement in Libya. Operation Mobile is the latest example of our military's ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises and unfolding events around the world. When called upon in reaction to the events in Libya, the Canadian Forces showed impressive readiness.

Within one day of being tasked by the Prime Minister, our navy was able to equip, configure and deploy HMCS *Charlottetown* to the Mediterranean, complete with an embarked CH-124 Sea King.

Our air force was equally professional in its response to the Canadian decision to participate in the enforcement of UN Security Council resolution 1973. It took mere hours for the men and women of 3 Wing Bagotville to prepare highly complex CF-18 fighter aircraft for deployment overseas, a deployment to a mission almost 7,000 kilometres away. Our CF-18s are providing a vital capability to the NATO-led efforts in Libya, a capability that is necessary for the success of the alliance's campaign.

In addition, our air force is contributing two CP-140 Auroras. These patrol aircraft are conducting critical surveillance and reconnaissance missions along the Libyan coast and are providing precious information to the coalition. The air force has also deployed one CC-150T Polaris and two CC-130T Hercules to Operation Mobile to conduct refuelling operations. They provide millions of litres of fuel to both Canadian and allied aircraft.

Canada's military operations in Libya demonstrate an enduring and proven truth, that the men and women who make up our Canadian armed forces are dedicated, professional and always ready to defend Canada and Canadian interests.

The government has made it a core priority to deliver the capabilities that our soldiers, sailors and air personnel need to provide this excellent service. For the Canadian Forces to have the ability to act quickly and effectively, they must be well equipped and the members well trained and motivated at all times.

Canadians expect our military to be able to provide a unique capability. They expect our military to be ready to respond to crisis situations, either at home or around the world, with the necessary personnel, equipment and expertise.

This is why the Canadian government introduced the Canada first defence strategy in 2008. The Canada first defence strategy is a solid plan to modernize our military. It is a plan to make the right investments in the right mix of capabilities. It is our investment in the strategy that allows the level of readiness we have seen in the Canadian Forces response to the crisis in Libya. It is our investment in our Canadian Forces that enables a timely deployment of our assets where they are needed, whether at home or abroad.

By continuing to implement the Canada first defence strategy, we will ensure that the Canadian Forces can continue to demonstrate leadership abroad, that Canada continues to be a reliable ally and that we can continue to assume our duty when crises erupt, as we are doing right now in Libya.

We have already achieved great progress in the delivery of the Canada first defence strategy with solid investments across the four pillars that underpin military capabilities: equipment, infrastructure, personnel and readiness.

Government Orders

Over the past years, the government has invested in defence infrastructure development and renewal, new hangars, runways, housing units and medical facilities that are absolutely critical to the functioning of a modern military. Our men and women in uniform need the proper installations for research, development, training and maintenance of equipment.

• (1605)

We will continue to make these necessary investments as we strive toward our objective to replace or refurbish 50% of the existing defence infrastructure over a 20-year period. That is an awful lot of infrastructure.

At the same time, we are also investing in the Canadian Forces' most important asset: our people. We are fortunate to have such a highly dedicated and professional force. We ask much of our men and women in uniform and we have a responsibility to provide them with the necessary support.

We have taken many new measures to enhance care and support for serving members. For example, this winter the Minister of National Defence announced the launch of phase three of the Joint Personnel Support Unit with the opening of five new integrated personnel support centres. These centres provide a one-stop service for ill and injured Canadian Forces personnel, former personnel, their families and families of the deceased.

Last fall, the minister also announced new measures to address some of the needs of the Canadian Forces personnel who have suffered serious injuries in Afghanistan. These measures, amounting to \$52.5 million over five years, will help us honour the sailors, soldiers and air personnel who have sacrificed so much for our country by establishing a legacy of care. We are also investing \$140 million in a health information system that will help improve the care available to service personnel who need it.

Importantly, the government is also delivering on its commitment to renew core equipment capabilities of the Canadian Forces. In July 2009, the government announced that it would purchase new and upgraded existing land combat vehicles for the army. Replacing and upgrading these vehicles is essential to maintain the Canadian Forces' ability to effectively and successfully conduct the missions we ask them to undertake.

In renewing core capabilities, we also take advantage of emerging technologies that can further reduce the risks to our soldiers by offering them a higher level of protection. The upgrading of the light armoured vehicle III, as well as the acquisition of the tactical armoured patrol vehicle, the close combat vehicle and other vehicles improving force mobility are proceeding as planned.

We are pursuing a national shipbuilding procurement strategy under which the new joint support ships and Arctic offshore patrol ships will be built. We will also launch the definition phase for the Canadian surface combatant project, which will renew the navy's surface fleet by replacing our destroyers and frigates. These ships are essential to ensuring that the navy can continue to monitor and defend Canadian waters and make significant contributions to international naval operations.

We are also making great strides with the renewal of Canadian Forces' aerospace capabilities. We started to take delivery of our new

fleet of CC-130J Hercules transport aircraft last year. The new aircraft is already a key contributor to military operations both at home and abroad. We are acquiring 15 F model Chinook helicopters, an aircraft that will become a crucial asset serving across the spectrum of Canadian Forces' operations.

Last year, we took delivery of the final updated CF-18 fighter aircraft, ensuring the extension of the fighter's life until the 2020 timeframe. The CF-18 modernization was essential to sustain the Canadian Forces' modern and interoperable fighter fleet.

To maintain our fighter capability beyond the 2020 timeframe, we will acquire our next generation fighter aircraft, the F-35 Lightning II. This will enable the air force to continue to operate effectively in the evolving security environment of the 21st century until well past 2050. Canada requires a fighter capability to defend the sovereignty of Canadian airspace, to remain a strong and reliable partner in the defence of North America through NORAD and to ensure interoperability with key allies as part of international operations.

The current operations in Libya are the clearest demonstration of the need for a strong fighter capability, a fighter capability that allows the Canadian Forces to operate alongside our allies in NATO operations and a fighter capability that allows our military to continue to be a leader on the world stage.

The Canadian Forces are well equipped and well trained to make important contributions to the international efforts such as those in Libya. The government will continue to make the necessary investments in our military's capabilities in accordance with the tenets of the Canada first defence strategy. We will ensure that our men and women in uniform can continue to help build international peace and security like they are doing in Libya as we speak.

Sustaining our participation in NATO's operations will continue to demonstrate Canada's leadership, our commitment to NATO and our reliability as an ally and partner. I encourage parliamentarians to support the extension of the Canadian Forces' Operation Mobile and I am pleased to hear the general support I have heard today in Parliament.

• (1610)

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my esteemed colleague on his re-election.

I was happy to hear a lot of references in his speech to veterans. I was on the Hill last November when there was a big support action led by the ex-ombudsmen, Pat Stogran and Mike Blais. They had made some very strong demands of the government to help veterans. We often think of veterans as being in World War I, World War II and so on, but many veterans come back from some of our missions like Afghanistan and likely after Libya.

Government Orders

What I did not hear much about in my esteemed colleague's speech was a reference to more diplomatic and humanitarian assistance. Is he satisfied with just the military mission?

• (1615)

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House.

Clearly, any mission like this, just like Afghanistan, is not a military-only solution. I was dealing more with the aspects of the Canadian Forces, but certainly it is a whole of government approach. I did mention that.

Part of the long-term solution in Libya, just like in Afghanistan, will come from the Libyan people themselves. Ultimately, they will decide the future of their country. We will be there to assist, along with the United Nations, the African Union, the Arab League, and other organizations that will form part of helping them to transition to whatever comes after the Gadhafi regime. That is certainly part of our government's approach, as it is with all of our allies.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have discussed many times many issues regarding national defence, I hope with the zeal that the member spoke of the firefighters he will bring an equal amount of zeal to the issue of search and rescue in the near future.

I want to ask the member about the responsibility to protect, which was the issue that was brought up through the United Nations and how it has become a model around the world. How does he see our responsibility to protect, as a nation of nations involved in this initiative, is to unfold over the next three and a half months?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, clearly, the responsibility to protect has special meaning for countries like Canada. We are one of the relatively few nations in the world that has the capacity to act in these situations and we have the history of being willing to do that, the history of being willing to stand up and fight for others, whether it is World War I, World War II, Korea, Afghanistan, peacekeeping, now Libya, whatever that is. It does have special meaning to Canada. That is something we will always pride ourselves on, being willing to do that.

It is an important practice, it is an important philosophy to maintain, that we as a country have to be willing to stand up even though sacrifice is involved. If it is important enough to do, then we should be prepared to do it. Because if we do not, who will?

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment my colleague on his speech. As has been mentioned in the discussion today, we are talking about the whole of government response and the member for Edmonton Centre has focused more on the military aspects.

Being a former member of our armed forces and a CF-18 pilot and former parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence, I know he is well-informed on these issues.

I want to ask him particularly, though, about the role of the integration of our forces, how they are working together with our international partners, how for example the *Charlottetown* picks up on radar missiles being fired. We heard some remarks from the minister of defence, that it calls into our NATO command centres and then they send out our Canadian Forces from Italy which

manage to take out the weapons in Libya that are being used to attack civilian forces.

I wonder if he would care to comment on that and the roles of the HMCS *Charlottetown* and the CF planes, as well?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the technical fighter pilot question.

The *Charlottetown*, the CF-18s, the Auroras, and the tankers are all part of a very complex operation. It is what we are equipped for. It is what we have trained for within the Canadian Forces. It is what we have trained for with our allies at places like Cold Lake during Operation Maple Flag and various training scenarios like that around the world. Now, of necessity, we have gained a lot of operational experience in actual operations where the training and the equipment has really come to the fore and shown that Canada does not have to take a backseat to anybody when it comes to the quality of our forces and the quality of the job that we can do for people around the world.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon and appreciate members who have taken part in the debate from all sides of the House as we discuss this very important mission to help the people of Libya.

I will state at the outset that the Libyan crisis is deeply concerning to Canada, specifically the plight of hundreds of thousands of people who are trapped in the conflict areas or have had to seek safety by fleeing to Egypt, Tunisia and surrounding countries.

The unbelievable images and heartbreaking stories emerging from Libya remind us in raw and stunning detail that our contributions are necessary. They are vital as the international community seeks to bring at least some semblance of stability to this volatile part of the world.

Canada acted swiftly in the days after the crisis began by immediately committing up to \$5 million in humanitarian assistance to help meet the most urgent needs of those affected by the crisis. Less than three weeks later, the Prime Minister announced an additional \$3.575 million, bringing the Canadian International Development Agency's overall response to over \$8 million.

The funding has been allocated through CIDA as follows:

The World Food Programme received \$1.5 million to provide emergency food assistance to displaced and conflict-affected populations in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.

The International Committee of the Red Cross received \$1.35 million to meet the emergency medical needs within Libya and to support Red Cross relief efforts in Tunisia and Egypt as well.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees received \$1.25 million to provide humanitarian support in the form of shelter, non-food items, water and sanitation to people displaced in neighbouring countries.

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies received \$250,000 to provide migrants displaced into Tunisia and Egypt with humanitarian relief such as food and non-food items and medical support.

Our own Canadian Red Cross Society received \$75,000 to transport humanitarian relief supplies from stockpiles in Dubai and Tunisia.

The International Organization for Migration received a further \$3.575 million to support repatriation efforts for migrants displaced into neighbouring countries by the fighting in Libya, helping them return to their countries of origin.

Additionally, the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force provided more than \$600,000 for the purchase of essential security equipment to enhance the safety of UN humanitarian personnel.

These contributions have been vital, even more so in the wake of disturbing allegations that have recently come to light. We have learned that rape and sexual violence are allegedly being used as weapons of war against the civilian population in Libya.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has established an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya, including allegations of sexual violence. Although the commission has not yet completed its investigations, it recently noted that it has received sufficient information to justify further investigation to determine the extent of these terrible crimes, including whether they were incited by command forces on either side of the conflict.

United Nations agencies are working closely with their partners inside Libya and in Tunisia near the Libyan border to help the victims of these despicable crimes. On the Tunisian border the group is providing post-rape medical kits to health facilities and service providers, training them to clinically manage rape and ethical issues related to treatment and reporting, providing survivors with psychological support and raising awareness of rape issues within communities.

We take these allegations of rape and sexual violence seriously. We are doing what we can to support our partners in their efforts to bring care to those who have suffered abuse. In fact, just today the Minister of International Cooperation announced an additional \$2 million to help those affected by fighting in Libya.

CIDA is providing \$1.75 million to the International Red Cross and \$250,000 to the UN Population Fund, UNFPA. The money will help the UN Population Fund protect women and girls from rape and sexual violence as well as help to provide critical care to the survivors of such shameful abuse.

• (1620)

This new funding brings Canada's combined humanitarian assistance contributions in Libya to \$10.6 million.

CIDA humanitarian funding provides support to organizations like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, enabling them to respond when necessary to specific aspects of crisis, including providing support to victims of gender-based violence.

[*Translation*]

The situation in Libya is volatile at best. Thousands of people remain in need of ongoing assistance within and beyond Libyan borders. They are desperate for food, water, sanitation, protection services and medical supplies. They need our help, which is why we are proud to support our humanitarian partners within the United Nations and the Red Cross movement. To deliver assistance effectively, humanitarian actors require access to all those affected by the crisis. That is why Canada has called on all parties involved in the Libyan conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law.

• (1625)

[*English*]

As the conflict persists, it remains critical for Canada to keep playing a supporting role in relief efforts. We continue to work closely with our international partners, including United Nations, to monitor the developing humanitarian situation and to provide expertise and assistance in an effort to alleviate the suffering of the victims of this crisis.

Canada's assistance is needed. We are working with our international partners to overcome the horrendous situation and I am pleased to see from the tenor of the debate today that all parties appear to support the extension of our mission in Libya.

What we have heard in the debate today is that we are engaged in an all of government response to the crisis in Libya. I think Canadians can be very proud of the response of our government as the crisis began to unfold; how our nation responded quickly to help with the evacuation of internationals caught in the conflict, working through Malta; and how very quickly as the international community, in alarm, began to see the use of force against Libyan civilians, our own Canadian forces became engaged as part of an international effort sponsored by the United Nations.

The member for Edmonton Centre very eloquently remarked, and I am very impressed and am sure many Canadians would be impressed, that our Canadian forces base in Bagotville was able to get those CF-18s scrambled, equipped and ready to participate in an international mission within just three days and on their way for deployment. Those original six aircraft are now backed up by a seventh CF-18.

I have to say how impressed I am with our military. Many of the members will have the opportunity to participate over the course of the summer in MP familiarization programs. I had the privilege last September to be on board the HMCS *Calgary* out of Esquimalt, while its sister ship, the HMCS *Charlottetown* is over there right now assisting in Libya.

Among the 225 personnel onboard, it was amazing to see the focus, the discipline, the knowledge and the way the teams on board the ship work together to accomplish tasks that none of them could do on their own. The importance of that training is certainly evident as we see the impact of our HMCS *Charlottetown* in the region right now, interacting with some 18 NATO ships that are offshore, how they were also engaged in de-mining the port at Misrata and how they are protecting the coast and the Libyan people by preventing weapons from arriving to support the Gadhafi regime.

Government Orders

We are very proud of the role our air force and all our armed forces personnel are playing. I think all Canadians should feel good about the whole of Canada's effort to make a difference in the lives of Libyans. We all hope this crisis will be resolved quickly so that in a few months' time we will not have to make difficult decisions as we move ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Halifax, The Environment; the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Seniors.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation.

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of International Cooperation announced another \$2 million to go into humanitarian assistance for Libya. It brings to a total of \$10.6 million that Canada has contributed toward humanitarian efforts.

Could the member talk about the success that we have had in working with our international partners, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, to assist the people of Libya?

• (1630)

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation for the role her department is playing with our international partners.

The first part of the crisis saw many Libyans fleeing the conflict zone crossed into Tunisia on one side or Egypt on the other. To their credit, these countries did their very best to respond and help.

Canada was quick to provide aid in helping to restore people, first, the internationals who were caught in the conflict, by helping with transportation, with aid and temporary shelter and all kinds of needs for the people displaced. It also helped to get supplies to the people of Libya through the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and our international partners to ensure people on the ground who needed water, food and assistance received it. Now people need counselling services, psychological services and aid in how to deal with the crisis of sexual violence.

We are on the job and we are doing our best to meet the needs of the people in difficult circumstances.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary covered it with an excellent question on what we were doing on the humanitarian and support side.

Would my hon. colleague comment on the broader question of the Canada first defence strategy and the importance of maintaining the momentum in that to keep our Canadian Forces equipped to do the kind of tough jobs we ask them to do, such as Libya?

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, this is a matter very close to the hon. member's own heart. It is certainly important for our Canadian armed forces.

We see the tragic losses in our mission in Afghanistan, the Highway of Heroes and the way Canadians have responded to the sacrifice of our armed forces personnel on the front lines. Canadians have come to understand how important it is when we send

courageous young people, wearing our Canadian uniform and having the flag on their shoulders, to ensure they have the kind of equipment that makes it possible for them to do the job with the least possible risk and the highest probability of success. That means equipping them with new ships to stay current with new technology, as technologies have advanced so quickly.

The Arctic is changing very quickly. We will need patrol vessels up there. We will need new supply ships. We need those submarines and we also need the air force. We need those F-35s.

A young man approached me on the street just as we headed into the election. He had just signed up as a volunteer. He wanted to get into the armed forces. He wanted to be in ground forces of the armed forces, but he wanted to know if we would have those F-35s so if he was on the ground in future in a conflict zone, the air force would be able to protect him and ensure that he came home safely. I pass that along to members.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to be a pilot as well, but I had a problem seeing over the dash, so I was told me, but nonetheless I am with the force in spirit.

I want to ask the hon. member a quick question about the security resolution that was passed, calling for the force upon the infrastructure and other things throughout Libya in the past while. We have seen a lot of that exercised with a great deal of precision, certainly from the professionalism, as exhibited by our own forces, such as those on HMCS *Charlottetown*, which I had the honour to visit a short time ago.

My hon. colleague has quite a bit of knowledge about what is happening on the ground in Libya, and I congratulate him for that. The situation in Benghazi is one thing, but I fear for the situation in and around Tripoli right now and just what the people there are going through. What kind of information are we receiving out of Tripoli as to the state and welfare of the individuals?

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member his concern for our military and the people on the ground in Libya. I wish that question had been directed to the member for Edmonton Centre, because he is much more on top of the current situation on the ground than I am, or to the people on the defence committee, yet our committees have yet to be struck.

I wish I had a detailed answer for his question. The situation on the ground is changing quickly. In co-operation with our international partners, we are doing our very best to protect civilians. He has raised a very legitimate concern. We are all concerned for the people on the ground as the dynamics to and fro with what remains of the Gadhafi forces. We all want to ensure that we do our best to protect those people.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will share my time with my colleague, the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor.

Government Orders

The military operation in Libya is, in a sense, the culmination of the evolution of the United Nations and international law, an evolution in which, I am proud to say, Canada has been involved many times on different levels.

As we know, this is the first time that the responsibility to protect has been invoked and carried out under the United Nations Security Council. Two other countries, Russia and France, have invoked this principle, but only as individual countries, and without the support of other nations.

As I said, this is a first, and Canada has been involved in the evolution towards the responsibility to protect. We should be proud of that.

Initially, we learned of the unacceptable violence and cruelty that Colonel Gadhafi was inflicting on his people from the media, but it is also through the International Criminal Court, more specifically the hard work of its chief prosecutor, that we have learned more about what is going on in the country and have been able to further justify our military involvement in Libya.

[*English*]

It is through the International Criminal Court and its chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, that we have been able to gather detailed evidence, in some cases provided by human rights groups, of Colonel Gadhafi's crimes against his people. In fact, by way of example, I will just read a quote from Mr. Moreno-Ocampo. In a news conference in The Hague a while back, he stated this about Colonel Gadhafi's forces:

His forces attacked Libyan civilians in their homes and in public spaces, shot demonstrators with live ammunition, used heavy weaponry against participants in funeral processions, and placed snipers to kill those leaving mosques after prayers.

I will digress for a moment to talk about the International Criminal Court, the role that Canada played in the establishment, and, more specifically, the role that a Liberal government and a Liberal foreign minister, who is well-known, Lloyd Axworthy, of the International Criminal Court since its work is so important in respect of this mission.

As members know, Canada played a pivotal role in the establishment of the court. It chaired a coalition of states called The Like-Minded Group, that helped to motivate the wider international community to adopt the Rome Statute.

Canada also contributed to the United Nations trust fund that enabled lesser-developed countries to participate in International Criminal Court negotiations.

I would add that it was a senior diplomatic, Philippe Kirsch, who was chosen by acclamation, which is quite an honour, to chair the committee of the whole at the diplomatic conference in Rome that was held in June and July 1998.

As I mentioned, Minister Axworthy was very much behind international support for the court.

It should also be mentioned that Mr. Kirsch was instrumental in drafting the final global proposal for the International Criminal Court.

Canada, under a Liberal government, was the fourteenth country to sign the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

On June 29, 2000, Canada enacted the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, becoming the first country in the world to adopt comprehensive legislation implementing the Rome Statute.

Finally, on July 7, 2000, Canada ratified the Rome Statute.

The International Criminal Court has played a significant role in the current developments in Libya, and Canada was very much involved with the court.

That brings me to the responsibility to protect. Here again, former foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy played a very important role, taking initiative from the wisdom and knowledge we had gained as a country, especially in Rwanda.

As members know, Minister Axworthy created a body called the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, an international United Nations group, that was asked to delve into this question of how we would get away from the original idea behind the United Nations, which was created in a cold war climate. The original idea was that we must never intervene in the sovereignty of a sovereign state because that would provoke war. However, in a post-cold war international environment, those considerations are lessened. Also, in a post-cold war international environment, we see that many of the conflicts are civil wars and many of the conflicts involve governments turning on their own people, as Colonel Gadhafi's government has done.

Lloyd Axworthy launched this international effort because he did not believe that in a civilized world we could allow dictators to simply massacre their own people. The problem was it was important that the idea be accepted by more than just a few western countries.

● (1640)

In 2005, the African Union included the concept of the responsibility to protect in its charter. All of a sudden the idea started to gain traction and, in 2006, the UN Security Council agreed to have this doctrine become part of international law.

My main point is that this mission in Libya is very much an extrapolation, if I may, of the role Canada has played in the international community, of the leadership that it has shown.

We need to be careful when we talk about the responsibility to protect R2P because it is still viewed with suspicion by many less developed countries that have a history of colonialism. They see the responsibility to protect as perhaps a pretext that could be used by countries that would want to intervene in unjustifiable circumstances to promote their interests. It could also be used by factions in a civil war situation where an unscrupulous warlord, for example, would provoke a crisis so that he could get some help from outside intervention.

We need to protect Canada's reputation as a peace-loving country, as a non-imperialist country. We need to protect Canada's reputation by being careful in how we participate in these kinds of missions. Canada's reputation is sterling and we have taken many years to build it up.

Government Orders

•(1645)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech.

Efforts are currently being made, and a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the military component and the United Nations resolution. However, could we get an update on the efforts currently being made to freeze Gadhafi's assets in the world? What is Canada's involvement in this effort?

Gadhafi is said to have immense wealth: \$104 billion, some of which was invested in Bahrain, Kenya and Zimbabwe, in countries where it is difficult to block these funds.

We know that China and Russia are also refusing to block certain funds, which poses a problem. It takes money to wage war, so there is work to be done. I hope that part of our contribution as a country will be to have the money blocked.

I would like the hon. member to update me on the search for Gadhafi's billions.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

He is absolutely right: we have to focus more on diplomatic efforts and contribute to building democratic institutions in Libya once the conflict is over. I hope that will be soon.

That is what we did in Sudan. We provided the money and expertise for the negotiation of a comprehensive peace agreement. That is what we must focus on. He is absolutely right.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I always have a great deal of respect for the member. He and I worked together on the environment committee in the last Parliament and, despite differences of opinion, he always came forward with thoughtful and well-researched positions to committee.

I agree with many of the comments that the member made today. It is important that the situation in Libya is brought to a quick resolution. We both agree that Colonel Gadhafi and his really brutal regime has been devastating for the Libyan people and that how it will be necessary to rebuild, once the war effort is over, within Libya and working with the Libyan people to find a solution to the current government.

I would like the member talk a bit about how important it is to actually develop the institutions that are required to support democracy, something that does not exist in that part of the world, and how, if we are going to have things like political parties, a government that is democratically elected or policy development that is done outside the realm of the people who control the government, then we need to help the Libyan people find ways to develop that infrastructure. I would just ask that the member provide comments along that line.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his kind words in my regard. Indeed, I enjoyed sitting on the environment committee when he was chairing it. I am a little

saddened that neither of us will be on that committee working together.

Canada has great democratic expertise. I would point to my leader's previous work in helping to draft the Iraqi constitution. He went to Iraq at one point to help develop its new constitution.

Elections Canada sends election observers all around the world. We forget that we have a very highly evolved democratic infrastructure and that Elections Canada is a big part of that.

It will take money. We had to spend a great deal of money to help the people of Sudan with a comprehensive peace agreement. I do not see that we can get away with just lip service. We will need to invest in democracy.

•(1650)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak in this particular debate. Like other members in the House, I will take this opportunity, since it is my first occasion to officially debate, to thank the constituents of Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor for handing me the honour of serving them once again for the next four and a half or five years.

I will begin by talking about the subamendment that we in the Liberal Party have moved in the House, which reads:

That the amendment be further amended by inserting after the words "political transition", the following:

That the Government of Canada engage with the Libyan National Council (LNC) based in Benghazi as a legitimate political entity and representative of the Libyan people; that it provide the LNC with advice and assistance in governance, including women's rights;

And further by inserting after the words "alleged crimes", the following:

That it ensure that Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, or visitors to Canada are not subject to any threats or intimidation by representatives of the Gadhafi regime.

My hon. colleague spoke of the many situations in which we have involved ourselves in this particular conflict, and certainly for all the right reasons, reasons that pertain to the general philosophy or responsibility to protect, as my colleague talked about, or R2P, and how we have engaged in this type of diplomacy over the past 10 or 15 years. It is certainly incumbent upon us to uphold the values and security of these people, as well as their well-being in whichever situation they find themselves throughout the world, whether it be in the Middle East, areas of eastern Europe or in the Asia Pacific.

I just want to deal with the situation specifically in Libya. Over the past little while we have seen what is being called the Arab spring and the situation where governments have been overturned. In some situations, although not totally absent of violence, they certainly were far more peaceful compared to other situations that we have currently, whether it be the mass exodus of people throughout Syria and the situation we are discussing today, which is Libya.

We have had examples such as Tunisia and Egypt which were certainly situations not without violence but, nonetheless, far better regime change scenarios than what we are faced with now. We are now faced with that particular dictator, who has been in office since the late 1960s and, ironically, came in under peaceful means, who is now being forcibly thrown out of office by the international community, or at least that is the goal.

Government Orders

I noticed an article in *The Economist* magazine several weeks ago that kind of outlines the situation regarding the people on the ground, the average citizens. It states:

Colonel Qaddafi's forces are running increasingly short of fuel. The people of Tripoli, his embattled capital, are short of just about everything, including food. The rebels in the east, based in Benghazi, are managing to import their basic requirements—and are getting diplomatically, politically and militarily better organised. The Qaddafi regime may hold out for a while yet, but time is not on its side. It is possible that it may implode.

We have not reached that scenario yet, but, as I said, that article was from a few weeks ago and we still find ourselves in that situation. We do, however, find ourselves in the wake of United Nations resolution 1973 regarding no-fly zones and, of course, UN Security Council resolution 1970, which talks about the strategic involvement of forces around the world. In this particular case, this is strong language from the UN spurred on by nations such as the United Kingdom. The British forces have taken the lead in this in many cases and, therefore, we are looking at what we feel is our ability to measure up when it comes to the situation for the people in Libya and also the basic human rights that are being trampled on in the most vicious and vile manner by a dictator who we know as Moammar Gadhafi.

I am very honoured that we have this opportunity to debate this in the House. So far, we have had a good, civilized debate, an illustration of just what we are fighting for in the nation of Libya, which is that some day the people of Libya can attain what we are doing here today, having a debate and the information bring put forward in the House to be received by the people of Canada. That, in and of itself, shows the model that we are striving for.

• (1655)

Although our forces are being engaged in dangerous tactics, such as strategic bombing and the actions of the HMCS *Charlottetown*, these are necessary actions by a government that believes we have a responsibility to protect. In this particular case, that is what drives the policy here. We want to protect people, particularly women and children, and their ability to have peace and security.

The international efforts underway in Libya, under resolutions 1970 and 1973, will be remembered as necessary resolutions carried out by the international community under the lead of Lieutenant General Bouchard.

I had the honour of meeting General Bouchard five or six years ago in Winnipeg. He is a gentleman with a great deal of responsibility on his shoulders with the NATO-led forces. He is indeed Canadian.

We called for the implementation of a no-fly zone and we support the military mission in Libya; however, this should be accompanied by diplomatic and political outreach efforts. I said earlier that this House is a model for which nations strive, that many nations have achieved, but some have not.

We need to help build the capacity for them to reach a level of political discourse that is peaceful, that provides security and well-being for all its citizens, and not just the select few. That way, like our country, the most vulnerable in society would be looked after and the institutions would remain to honour them. That is what we strive for. The measures taken by the UN, the NATO-led mission and

by our brave soldiers, will hopefully be achieved in a much shorter time than we imagined.

We must protect Libyan civilians. Parliament must have a say in this and all other combat operations, which I am glad we are doing here today. This has been a very civilized debate and I am honoured to take part in it.

We support the continuation of humanitarian aid to the people of Libya through organizations such as the United Nations Refugee Agency, which has done great work over the past little while and will continue to do so. As the active players, we are in and under the structure of the United Nations, and this is something that we are dedicated to. I am glad to hear that everybody in this House is of the same opinion.

The International Red Cross, as we have seen time and again around the world, is a beacon of hope for so many. It has been a shining inspiration for us, who may not require its assistance, and for many nations ravaged by natural disasters, such as Haiti. I had one in my riding last year and the Red Cross did play a role as well as the Canadian military.

In this particular situation, we should do all that we can in this House to provide the assistance required by the United Nations Refugee Agency as well as the International Red Cross as they do fantastic work.

Diplomacy development should be a significant element in Canada's approach to the situation in Libya. It is that capacity-building of democracy that we have been so good at over the past 30 years or more, since the days of Lester Pearson. We strive to become the broker of what is good in society, which is the capacity to build democracies through the infrastructure of social policies such as medicare. We strive for universal health care and for those who are most vulnerable.

It is beyond this particular mission, this three and a half months that we are debating, that we must look to. I am glad to hear that we are talking a lot about the humanitarian efforts involved in this mission that go beyond the particular timeline set out in this debate.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor for his comments. I had the good opportunity to be in his riding last summer. If anyone ever gets a chance to be there, they should definitely take it.

As I think about that, I am reminded of the freedoms we have in Canada and what the people in Libya are trying to achieve with a regime change and the atrocities they are facing.

My colleague always has good thoughts and opinions. I would appreciate his thoughts on how Canada might assist not only in humanitarian but democratic reform, particularly around human rights.

• (1700)

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his kind remarks.

I remember when we travelled together to the Council of Europe and saw debates engaged by democracies that were not at the level that we are. They lacked a majority. I am sure he also recalls some of the debates between nations such as Georgia and Russia, and just how tumultuous they were. No comparison to the good democracy that we have here.

The human rights aspect is key because, as I can only hope that this mission will see the end of the Gadhafi regime, then we will see the capacity-building that he speaks of to bring those human rights to the most vulnerable of that particular society.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue in the same vein as the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, who wondered how we will continue to help the people of Libya after the conflict. I would also like to know how we can continue to develop and encourage good governance, diplomacy and democracy in certain countries that may have been forgotten but are going through very difficult times, even though they have fallen off the radar screen.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and welcome her to the House of Commons. I thank her because I want to bring up a situation that I had the experience of seeing first-hand when I visited Israel and took a trip to the West Bank and went to Ramallah. At the time, one of the programs being talked about in the West Bank was one that was reliant on two nations in particular, the United States as well as Canada, to help strengthen its system to provide powers for its judicial branch of governance as well as other matters involving police security. What that illustrated was that there is one piece of governance that we do extremely well in and that we have the opportunity to bring that to other countries by telling them about our experiences. It is a piecemeal way of building capacity within nations.

Other nations have their strengths. France and even the U.K. could also help out with the local security issues that they deal with very well. As nations talking amongst each other at the United Nations we were able to find out that this nation can provide this, that nation can provide that. Therefore, we should get together to provide what we see as a far better Libya after this debate as opposed to before this debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say first that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Since this is my first speech in the House, I would like to thank, as members usually do, the people in my riding for choosing me as their member. I would also, of course, like to thank my friends, my family, my mother and father, my wife, Chloé, and my whole campaign team.

As the Bloc critic for foreign affairs and defence, I am pleased to express my views to the House in a debate as important as this.

Last March 21, our party approved this mission for some very specific reasons.

Government Orders

I should say at the outset that the Bloc Québécois will once again support the mission. We think, though, that Canada should be very careful with its actual implementation in the field.

The Bloc Québécois bases its support for this military mission in Libya on certain principles. The mission is being carried out, it must be said, at the peril of the men and women who chose to join the armed forces in order to serve the values and interests of their country, and who do so very responsibly and with great courage.

The principles to which we subscribe and which should continue to guide Canada and the other UN members involved in this action to provide military support to the persecuted civilian population are as follows: first, the multilateral nature of the military intervention, organized and directed by the Security Council and the United Nations; second, the specific strategic means laid out in resolutions 1970 and 1973 and legitimately approved in a vote of the House of Commons; and finally the ultimate purpose of the military intervention, which is to protect the lives of Libyan civilians.

It is important to say that, in our view, the international community's involvement in Libya stems from the doctrine of the responsibility to protect.

The doctrine of the responsibility to protect is based on three pillars: the primary responsibility of states to protect their own people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; the responsibility of the international community to help a state discharge its duty to protect; and finally, in the case of particular concern here, the responsibility of the international community to take prompt, decisive action in accordance with the UN charter when a state manifestly fails in its duty to protect its people from one or more of these four major crimes.

In this spirit of democracy, our party would remind the House and the government that renewal of the Canadian mission in Libya, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973, calls for the greatest political and military prudence.

We believe that at the end of this three-and-a-half-month extension, this mission and the operational framework for it will have to be debated much more fully. Among other things, the debate will have to allow for an assessment of actions on the ground, the financial costs of the mission and the results as they relate to the intended objectives.

Accordingly, the Bloc Québécois reminds the House that the sovereignty of Parliament is the guarantee of the sovereignty of all Canadians, through the representatives they have chosen. That is why the National Defence Act provides that Parliament must be convened to debate any military deployment abroad, and that is what we will have to do beyond that three and a half months, should that be the case.

The success of an effective intervention strategy in this case will depend on a combination of limited military interventions, that is, interventions that should be essential to protect civilians, in accordance with the United Nations resolution, and promotion of de-escalation of the conflict leading to a ceasefire and genuine political dialogue.

Government Orders

•(1705)

We contend that Canada must continue to absolutely condemn the immoral use of force and abuses of power against Libyan citizens attributed to the Gadhafi regime, and in particular, as highlighted by the motion we are currently debating, the intolerable and inhumane practice of rape as a weapon of war, which transforms human bodies into machines of war and takes away the most fundamental security of the person.

Canada must also continue to promote recognition of the sovereignty of the Libyan people in determining their political destiny. On that point, the recent developments in the news attest to the desire expressed by the International Criminal Court prosecutor for Colonel Gadhafi to be arrested by his fellow Libyans.

Canada and NATO should demonstrate support more openly for diplomatic initiatives intended to achieve a ceasefire as soon as possible and to initiate a genuine dialogue in support of the efforts of the United Nations special envoy, Abdul Ilah Mohamed Al-Khatib.

We also welcome the decision by the International Criminal Court prosecutor to investigate what appear to be crimes against humanity in Libya. The Bloc Québécois would also like to say that it stands with and express its concern for Quebeckers and Canadians of Libyan origin, who have been worried for some weeks now and must be even more worried today.

The Bloc Québécois therefore supports the government in extending Canada's military mission in the Libyan conflict based on the principles of respect for human life, respect for human rights and freedoms, and the political sovereignty of the Libyan people in their struggle for civil liberties and a better life, which is not without suffering for them.

Obviously this is not a case of military intervention with the aim of taking away the right of the Libyan people to sovereign self-determination, by invading or partitioning the country. On the contrary, the aim of the mission is to protect the lives of people who are determined to change their political situation at all costs.

The sequence of violent events in Libya shows that the adoption of resolutions 1970 and 1973 by the United Nations Security Council was necessary. As a result, our party supports the measures taken by Canada to implement resolution 1970, which in essence authorizes member states to seize and dispose of Libyan military equipment, impose an embargo on the sale of arms in Libya, impose sanctions against individuals and freeze their assets, facilitate and support the return of NGOs and humanitarian agencies to Libya, create a committee to monitor the situation in Libya, and co-operate with the International Criminal Court in its desire to bring the members of the Gadhafi regime who are accused of crimes against humanity to justice.

The Bloc Québécois also supports the government in the measures put in place to enforce resolution 1973, and in particular those measures relating to strengthening the freeze on assets provided for in resolution 1970.

Our party offers its support to the Government of Canada on a number of fundamental aspects of this humanitarian military mission. However, we must state our reservations concerning the

management of this operation and the financial costs incurred to date, as well as the costs that will be incurred over the coming months.

We call on the government to be more rigorous in its calculations so it is able to present Parliament with detailed cost estimates for carrying out this military campaign. The estimates done by defence experts who have spoken on this in the national media in recent days are completely contrary to the forecasts made by the Department of National Defence. Those experts say that the government is much too lax in calculating the costs of this military operation. How high might these costs go in reality? Right now, we do not know.

I would like to thank the members of the House for their attention. Rest assured that the Bloc Québécois is still here, although our numbers are fewer, and that we bring determination and rigour to our analyses, in order to defend democracy and human rights.

•(1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his election to the House.

As members are aware, our government is embarking on a three-pronged approach: the military involvement to stop the regime and to hold it accountable, the diplomatic efforts working with the National Transition Council to find a way forward for the Libyan people, and the humanitarian aid piece of the project.

Could the member comment on the announcement made earlier today by the Minister of International Cooperation regarding the assistance to the Red Cross and, in particular, the program to deal with gender-based violence?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

Of course, the government's support for increased humanitarian aid is important. Any additional humanitarian aid measures that can be put forward by this government will serve to improve conditions on the ground. Given the large number of refugees within the country's borders and the difficulty in providing supplies, the humanitarian aid that Canada can provide through organizations such as CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, will allow local organizations to provide care, food and everyday essentials.

•(1715)

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia on his speech, which I paid close attention to. I should point out that I felt it was somewhat contradictory, in that the hon. member put a lot of emphasis on humanitarian aid and diplomacy, yet he is fully supporting the Conservative motion.

Does he not feel that this motion is like handing the government a blank cheque? Would it not be more prudent and more in keeping with the will of Quebeckers to go with the NDP's amendment?

Government Orders

Mr. Jean-François Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the clarification. First of all, the Bloc Québécois will support both the NDP motion and the Liberal amendment to the amendment, which will complete the government motion. To clarify, it is important to us—and my colleagues may have determined this from the approach presented—to set parameters for Canada's decision to continue its intervention in Libya.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here today for this review primarily because the government has made a decision to have the House involved in trying to gain unanimous support for going forward with what is taking place in Libya.

I would be interested to hear the Bloc's perspective on whether it feels this is a good way to continue to proceed and whether we should come back to this in September or October in an attempt to continue to have this type of unanimous support from the House of Commons in going forward for what is happening in Libya?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Fortin: Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to understand and to inform the House that when Parliament resumes in the fall, at the end of the three-and-a-half-month extension, the House will have to reflect on any further extension. We will have to have a much more complete analysis of this mission, in terms of the action taken, the costs and the results. We will require a complete analysis. I must point out that it is the House that must make any decision regarding the deployment of troops abroad. This fall, more information will have to be provided by the government so that we have a better analysis of the situation.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in this House today to discuss Canada's role in the responsibility to protect civilian life in Libya. The United Nations Security Council resolution 1973 gave us that mandate.

Here, I want to be clear that had I been present in this House when this place first voted to support the mission, I would have voted with all the members present and said, "Yes, Canada has that role".

There is no greater obligation or moral responsibility falling to elected representatives in the course of any train of human events than the decision to send its fellow citizens into harm's way in a war zone and to risk their lives and the lives of others in pursuit of a cause in which it has been determined that only military action will suffice. In that sense, the Green Party acknowledges that there is such a thing as a just war, although the party, not just in Canada but also globally, subscribes as a fundamental principle to the pursuit of non-violence and peace.

In this context, the accepted international human rights norm of the responsibility to protect, which has been acknowledged since 2005, represents a new level of moral responsibility. Just as we might have said ages ago, "If someone beats their children, it's not our business" or "If a man beats his wife it's not our business, and we don't go into their house", now we have an exception to those notions of national sovereignty and can say that we can intercede. Now can go into their house because we recognize that there is a

wrong being conducted, that innocent lives are at risk and that we have a right to intervene under the responsibility to protect.

Why then do I fear that I must vote against this motion? We have seen what is now referred to as mission creep, an extension of the responsibility to protect within Libya to a goal of regime change.

In order to meet the goals of UN resolution 1973, our primary goal should be a ceasefire, negotiated solutions and diplomacy. However, when the African Union came forward with a proposal through South African President Zuma, its peace proposal was rejected. Now there may have been other flaws, and I accept that. However, the only peace proposal on the table that was accepted by the government of Gadhafi was rejected by key NATO partners, because we suddenly said that a precondition to any ceasefire must be the removal of Colonel Gadhafi.

I must be very clear here as well. I deeply desire the removal of Colonel Gadhafi, but not by military means in what appears to be a civil war in which Canada has taken sides. An immediate ceasefire is needed, yes. Protection of human life is required.

However, many of the things I have heard hon. members say in this House over the course of today could apply to other governments in whose countries we have not intervened. It is not enough to say, "We have not engaged in Syria, so we should not continue in Libya". It is not enough to say, "We have rejected the calls of the United Nations for peacekeepers to help end the systematic rape of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so we mustn't continue in Libya". I'm not saying that.

I am saying that other governments have their turned guns on their own peoples, whether in Myanmar or, as I prefer to call it, Burma, or in Syria or other places around the world, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we are not engaged.

So when we do choose to engage, we must keep our eye on the mission. The mission is the protection of civilians.

My own experience of this is only generational. I can only speak of how I was raised by my father. My father grew up in London during the blitz and he shared with us something that I think we should all bear in mind when we decide to go to war. In his view, as he used to tell us when we watched bombs falling on North Vietnam, there is no greater way to strengthen the resolve of a civilian population than aerial bombardment. There is no greater way to solidify their resolve to detest those who drop the bombs than aerial bombardment.

• (1720)

We need to recognize that collateral damage is not just the lives of innocents that we inevitably lose in aerial bombardment. Collateral damage is damage to our very souls. Collateral damage damages our legitimacy. Collateral damage is something that, while inevitable in war, should be deeply avoided when our mission is to protect innocent lives and we are not a nation at war.

Government Orders

For these and many reasons, I depart from the very good and noble objectives that I recognize on all sides of this House. I recognize that the opposition parties have put forward amendments which essentially say “yes” to the government motion, but they say “yes, but”.

In my case, on behalf of the Green Party and my constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, I must say “no, but”. I see we have a role as peacekeepers. I believe passionately that we must return to our role as peacekeepers as a nation that is so well known around the world for peacekeeping. We have a role within NATO to be the nation that stands and says, enough of the aerial bombardment, now is the time to send in the diplomats. Let us work with colleagues who have some chance of reaching the illegitimate government of Mr. Gadhafi. Let us work with colleagues in the African Union, the Arab League and the United Nations, and be the country that says that we do not continue to give a blank cheque to a mission that has no exit strategy.

With that and with deepest respect to all members on this side of the House, the other side of this place, I thank them all for what I know are deeply felt and high motives in going forward in the mission of Libya, but they will go forward without my vote.

• (1725)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a former professional diplomat, I can assure the hon. member that now is not the time to send in the diplomats in the absence of military support and in the absence of military operations that are continuing.

However, in an effort to help the hon. member not become the outlier in this House on the vote later today, could I ask where she sees in the government motion, in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, in the objectives that are being pursued by NATO allies to protect civilians, to establish a no-fly zone, to enforce an arms embargo, where she sees in any of the positions taken by the government, or indeed the official opposition and the Liberal Party today, any intention to pursue regime change?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the parliamentary secretary has significant and quite impressive credentials in this area personally and I salute him for that.

However, there are numerous indications in statements made today before this House. Various members of the government party have said there can be no peace while Mr. Gadhafi is present, we cannot negotiate unless Mr. Gadhafi is removed.

This is a report from the BBC in which the former head of the British army, Lord Dannatt said:

The mission under UNHCR 1973 is quite clear, it's to protect people but of course the implied task, and let's be absolutely open and honest about it, is the removal of Colonel Gadhafi

We have heard similar things from other representatives from within the NATO mission, particularly the chief, the chair of the group within the contact group on Libya. In the Doha meeting U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague stated:

Participants remain united and firm in their resolve. Gadhafi and his regime have lost all legitimacy and he must leave power, allowing Libyan people to determine their own future.

There is ample evidence that the mission has shifted. In fact I mention to my hon. friend that if not for mission creep on the Libyan mission to protect civilians, we might not have lost the support of China and Russia in the United Nations to make a similar effort in Syria to protect lives there.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments. I am a little puzzled, though. In her remarks she mentioned that she was aware of some of the atrocities that have allegedly been going on in Libya, including the allegations of mass rapes which have been ordered, apparently, by the Gadhafi forces. These are the subject of a prosecution by the International Criminal Court.

I wonder if she could explain to this House how we can sit back and not protect the women of Libya by using our military under the UN resolution to protect the civilian population of Libya if we do not pass this resolution today and continue our mission until these terrible atrocities are stopped?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier today in the course of this debate that the inconsistency of the government's position troubles me greatly.

We have been asked three times, not once but three times, by the United Nations to send two peacekeepers, and in particular Lieutenant General Andrew Leslie's name was mentioned, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the proof of using rape as a systematic weapon of war affecting thousands and thousands of women calls for us to respond. We have rejected those requests.

In this instance I believe that we will have a role of great legitimacy as a nation that participated in the first phase of responsibility to protect, and then stepped out of that role, working through the United Nations, to demand that we have peace negotiations with the first goal being a full ceasefire without the precondition of the Mr. Gadhafi's resignation.

• (1730)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to make my first speech in the 41st Parliament.

I want to acknowledge the electors of Windsor—Tecumseh for having returned me to this office for the fifth time and to say a special thanks to all of the volunteers who worked on my election campaign, both in the May 2 election and any number of ones before that. It never ceases to amaze me, the willingness of volunteers to come forward and spend lots of hours and donate lots of money to support my candidacy. I accept that support with a great deal of humility.

Special acknowledgement to my wife of almost 42 years, my three children and their spouses for all the support they have given me since I have been here in the House, but a special note in this vein to the inspiration that my four grandchildren give me. That inspiration really leads into the role that we have to play here today and that is about building a better world, for them and for the children and grandchildren all across this globe.

Government Orders

I do not know if it has been enunciated as clearly as it could have been in the debate so far, so I want to address some comments to the reality of what we are engaged in here today in this debate and in this motion is quite historical. It is a minor step, but it is a reflection of a movement to change international law and international relations.

Canada has a great deal of reason to be proud for the work we have done, particularly since the second world war, in developing international standards for human rights. The Declaration of Human Rights was actually drafted by a Canadian. The work that we have done in developing peacekeeping as a methodology of reducing and in some cases eliminating war, and now the next step that we are taking, and again, in which Canada has played a major role at the United Nations, and that is to develop the principle of the responsibility to protect.

It is a basic principle and it is kind of interesting that it has taken us this long. I remember taking international law in law school. My professor at that time said that on average, it is at least 100 years, maybe 200 years before we evolve a new principle and actually enforce it in international law.

The reality is that since the second world war that timeframe has shrunk and we are moving, from a historical perspective, more rapidly to establish order where there is chaos, where there is violence, where there is war and where there are acts of inhumanity to our fellow citizens. The responsibility to protect is one of those next steps, much as establishing the International Criminal Court was.

Today when we are debating this, we really are debating when does the international community have a responsibility to step in and to say to a sovereign nation, because obviously the regime in Libya is at this point, that it does not have a right to put down peaceful protest, democratic rights of assembly or freedom of speech with the use of violence. The international community, the UN in particular, would say that a sovereign country does not have a right to kill its citizens; it does not have a right to commit war crimes; it does not have a right to commit crimes against humanity.

When we look at this motion today, we are recognizing that yes, we will be engaged along with a number of allies, in military action. What goes with that is again the responsibility to not just stop with the military action because we know it has limited usage.

• (1735)

We were forced to do this because of the intent expressed by Mr. Gadhafi to massacre those who opposed him, with the clear ability to do it, and the actions he had already begun to take to carry out that goal. However, it is not enough.

It is also not enough in these circumstances to say that we can do this indefinitely. The leadership of the insurgency in Libya, the people of Libya, ultimately have to resolve that themselves. The best we can do on an interim short-term basis is not allow Mr. Gadhafi to kill his people. That is as far as this motion takes it as the NDP see it.

The balance of the motion, though, is at least as important as that part of the motion that mandates military intervention on our part, and that is the need to see that the investigation that the International Criminal Court has initiated against members of that regime is properly resourced if, in fact, there is sufficient evidence to find there

have been breaches of international law, with crimes against humanity being at the top of that list. As a country, and along with our allies, we need to see that the investigation is conducted properly and if there is sufficient evidence that prosecutions are forthcoming. That is part of the evolution of what we are going through.

From everything I know about criminal activity, we are only going to be able to stop genocides, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity if the perpetrators of that kind of violence know they are not going to get away with it, that they are going to be caught and with proper investigations and sufficient evidence, they will be prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to an appropriate justice. If we do not build that mentality right around the globe, then we will have more Rwandas.

The humanitarian aid that we have proposed to add to this, which thankfully the government and the Liberals have agreed to now, is absolutely necessary. So we are clear, we are talking short-term aid. Libya overall is quite a wealthy country. It is not like Egypt and Tunisia that are in much worse economic shape. As this evolves, if there is a stable government there, it will be quite capable of taking care of the needs of all of its people. However, in the interim, humanitarian aid is absolutely necessary.

With regard to the support that we have shown for this resolution, it is clear that the UN, under Resolution 1973, has not only called on members of the United Nations to take part in military action, but it is obviously requiring diplomatic endeavours to have a ceasefire to end the violence on both sides so that the killing stops.

Canada has to take a more active role in that. I draw the attention of the members to the work that Turkey and Norway are doing in terms of trying to resolve this in a peaceful way. We certainly should be assisting them by stepping up at the diplomatic level our activities in that regard.

I would be remiss if I did not speak about the role that communities in Windsor Essex County have played. The second weekend after the insurgency and the violence started in Libya, a significant rally was held with some fundraising. Just in those few days over \$400,000 was raised, not just in the Windsor area but other parts of Canada as well. This was led mostly by the medical community. We have a large number of expatriate Libyans now Canadian citizens who practise medicine in this country. They were a big part of the fundraising.

• (1740)

I met with one of the doctors a couple of weeks ago, before the House started back. He had just come back from Libya. He was telling me that they had been rotating medical personnel from Canada, mostly expatriate Libyans, back through Libya on a two-week rotation, in a lot of cases providing expert medical attention. It is absolutely needed.

In addition to that, they have raised additional funds. He was estimating it at least several million dollars just from the community in Canada. They were moving food and medicine into Benghazi in particular and were about to move it through Misrata as well.

Government Orders

All that work was done within the community in Canada, by their efforts both in terms of providing the medical services and in terms of providing medicine and food. He was critical of the government for not doing more in terms of providing humanitarian aid.

I applaud the government for its announcement today on the increased amounts it is giving, but it is not enough. The needs in the eastern part of Libya are particularly great and we have to step that effort up with assistance through the NGOs across the globe.

I actually spoke to the group at one point. There was a fundraiser dinner one night. We were talking about whether there would be military intervention. When I got off the stage, I was surrounded by the members of the community. They were very clear and adamant that they would not have their country, in spite of the violence that was going on, occupied by anybody else.

It is one of the reasons why we in the NDP were adamant in amending this motion, so it would very clear that this mandate would not allow for any ground troops to be put into Libya. The euphemism of “no boots on the ground” is an absolute for the Libyan population.

There have been too many times in their history when they have been occupied, to their great detriment, and they are not prepared to tolerate that ever again.

I have listened to the debate, off and on, today. It has been interesting. With regard to the role that we should be playing, the absolute need is for Canada to be extremely careful of not dictating what the outcome is going to be in the sense of building democracy there. That has to be led by the Libyans themselves.

Again, we put very clear wording in the amendments that we proposed to this motion, and accepted by the government, that it has to be a Libyan-led transition. It cannot be dictated by Canada or by the international community.

We can be there to provide assistance, if they need assistance and if they ask for it. We should be there to assist them, whether it be in humanitarian aid or in building democracy. It may be a democracy that is not similar to ours and certainly not the same as ours. We have to be broadminded enough to still provide support if that is requested, so they can build their democracy as they see fit.

Again, I was bit concerned with some of the comments today about what our role should be in that regard. I think we have to be brave enough and courageous enough to step back. This is an independence movement in many ways in Libya, led by people, the young people in a lot of cases, who are very determined that they will do it their way.

We absolutely do not have a right to be dictating to them the type of government that will be established. We can only be there to provide support. This is true of any other number of countries that are looking for assistance. We do not dictate the outcome.

●(1745)

I want to make one final comment and then I have a couple of amendments I want to propose.

Going back to the point about military intervention and talking about all of the other countries that also need support, we cannot use

that as an excuse. As I said earlier in my opening comments, this is a baby step that we are taking with regard to establishing the responsibility to protect. Our responsibility as members of the United Nations, when it passes a resolution like 1973, is to support it.

We do not have the resources to do it for every country in the world that needs help, but we can, as an example, say to other countries that we are doing it here and if we could afford to or were able to, we would do it elsewhere always under the auspices of the United Nations. We want the rest of the world to come onside. It would not be a baby step if we got the rest of the world onside, but we can provide some leadership in that regard. If we provide the leadership and get the rest of the world to follow suit, then perhaps our grandchildren and maybe our great grandchildren will never be faced with genocide in their lifetimes.

There are a couple of problems with the motion as it is. I think I have general consent and support for what I am about to propose. In the original motion, the government used the phraseology of “another extension”. We want to be very clear. The NDP position is there will only be this extension and we want that singularized. I will come back to the actual wording in a moment.

The Liberal subamendment referred to the transitional council as the Libyan National Council. It is occasionally called that, but its formal name is the National Transitional Council and is generally recognized around the globe as that. Therefore, I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following. I move:

That the motion from the government be amended by replacing the phrase “another extension” with “an extension”, and also that the subamendment be changed by replacing “Libyan National Council (LNC)” with the “National Transitional Council (NTC)”.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment to the amendment to the amendment is in order. Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the amendment to the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Amendment to the amendment to the amendment agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Windsor—Tecumseh has basically summed up any remarks I would have made.

I wanted to extend particular appreciation from the Edmonton Libyan community, which has held a series of rallies in Edmonton in which I participated. All along it has called for and asked for the support of Canada in exactly the way the amended motion calls for.

Government Orders

This request is coming from the fathers, husbands, women and children who are very concerned about their families in the communities in Libya. I know we will be very grateful for the continued support and intervention so long as that intervention is limited to and extended to providing humanitarian support and being there for the purpose of protecting the families of Libya.

● (1750)

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that the national council that has been formed in the last few months in Canada has a good number of participants from Alberta, both Calgary and Edmonton, particularly from the medical community. Some of the same members have been going through the rotation, particularly in Benghazi, in providing services to their compatriots.

My colleague is correct about the absolute refusal to accept ground troops, but the acknowledgement that they needed the assistance to stop the killings, both the ones that had occurred and the ones that clearly would occur if the international community had not intervened. The council has been very strong on that. In fact, that council is now led, I believe, by two of the doctors from the Alberta community.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to agree with the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh with regard to the historic nature of this debate and the unprecedented nature of the near unanimity we have achieved and are set to achieve again today.

However, I would like to ask the member this. Given his riding's own connection with Canadian military history by being named after a great Canadian warrior, and given the many principles that underlie our continuing multilateral action in Libya extending from the emphasis on local leadership, the Arab League, the African Union involvement, the UN authorization, the collective action under NATO auspices, human rights, avoiding civilian casualties, the quick reference to the International Criminal Court, the responsibility to protect, one of its earliest and I think clearest attempts at implementation, as well as the humanitarian agenda which underpins so much of the discussion that we are having today and the challenges on the ground, would he not agree that in many ways this mission not only bears heavy involvement by Canada but Canadian fingerprints in many respects, given our country's involvement in the establishment of these institutions and the formulation of these policies over decades?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I would agree with my colleague and I thank him for the question.

As I said in my speech, the role that we played historically since the second world war probably does not have any other country in the world as a peer. We have possibly done more in providing that leadership than any other country in the world.

I have to say to my colleague that the work done in Afghanistan I think was an error. We went off on an angle that we should not have in that regard and that has hurt our reputation internationally. However, we certainly have every right to claim a role here.

Let me make this point. I believe we are also at the stage where we are moving forward from simply peacekeeping to peacemaking, but we can only do that under the auspices of the United Nations. Therefore, we have to be supportive of the United Nations and must

work over the next decades to put in place a system that does not allow at any given time the major powers to dictate what type of intervention there will be in a sovereign nation's decisions. It would only be an international body that would do that based on international law. We should be very much a part of that movement.

● (1755)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the course of listening to and participating in the debate throughout the day there were a couple of things that strike me. One is that it is abundantly clear that regime change is not an explicit goal although it clearly would be consistent with the explicit goals of the mission. The other is that there really does not appear to be any clarity around an exit strategy. Coming from my background, we would commonly say if we cannot measure it, we cannot manage it. I would be interested in the member's comments on what are the benchmarks against which we measure the success of the mission.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I disagree adamantly with his initial premise that somehow this motion would be supportive of a regime change agenda. I want to be absolutely clear, as I believe have all of the speakers from the NDP who have addressed this issue today, that we are not supportive of an agenda that leads to regime change. That is not our decision; that is not our role. We are simply dealing with military action because we need to protect civilian lives. Therefore, I reject that premise totally.

With regard to assessing whether this has an exit strategy for us, it is quite simple. Canada will not be there in three and a half months. It is as simple as that. Therefore, there is an exit strategy and there is a way of testing it. If we look at three and a half months from now, which I think is the middle of September, we will not be there.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated working with my hon. colleague in the past on the justice committee and I look forward to working with him in this Parliament. I am a little confused by his last statement.

The United Nations resolution, which I think we all support, says that we must protect the lives of civilians. If the Gadhafi regime is still brutally killing, torturing, raping, and committing other atrocities against civilians, do we not continue to have an obligation to do what we can to protect them whether that ends on September 15 or not? I would like to hear his comments on that.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I have to say to my colleague from Mississauga—Erindale that he has abandoned the justice committee and will not be on it in this Parliament. I am not going to forgive him for that. We had some great battles there.

With regard to the question, and it certainly is a valid one, the reality is that if the fighting is still going on in three and a half months, it clearly is a complete civil war and we cannot do anything at that point to be of assistance. When I say "we", I mean the international community. It is as simple as that.

The alternative, if we accept that we are going to continue on, would be to move troops on the ground and all the rest of it. That is not the way we should be building that system that I talked about in my opening comments.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an important debate today, not just in form but in substance. What is just as important in the motion and the amendments is the word solidarity. Today is an important day. We must not forget the horrors of the Holocaust. We have a responsibility, as citizens of the world, to ensure such horrors never reoccur. Dictators must be fought. Canada has always taken a stand when it was time to intervene. We have all due regard for the sovereignty of countries, but there comes a time when civilians must be protected and we must act.

Every time I see things like what is happening in Libya—I asked a question this morning about this—I think of General Dallaire and what happened in Rwanda. We do not want history to be forever repeating itself. We have a responsibility, therefore, as parliamentarians and as a country to intervene and demonstrate our solidarity with the people of Libya, who are suffering terribly.

We could talk about what is happening in Syria, in the Middle East, or elsewhere in Africa and in other countries. Every case is unique, but the basic principle is the same. I was proud to serve as a Liberal minister, and I have sat on both sides of the House. Canada must always take a stand when civilians need protection. That is why we supported Canada's participation in the Afghan mission from the outset. That is why we support this motion today, although not blindly. We have to be specific, and that is why we support UN Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973.

Every time we have had this kind of debate in the House, the Liberal Party has replied ready, aye, ready, whether as the government or the official opposition, as it is today. Regardless of who our leader was, we have always been there to protect people. It is important to us that this motion be based on protecting civilians from an imminent threat and imposing a no-fly zone.

We do not believe that troops should be put on the ground. We have already established an air mission. We are providing support. We belong to NATO and the UN. If Canada had won a seat on the UN Security Council, it might have been able to play a more significant role. Today, as parliamentarians, we must show, with civility, just how much Canada must play a leading role and participate actively in this mission.

What is happening in Libya is serious. We saw the Jasmine Revolution this spring in the Maghreb, in the Middle East. We saw our Tunisian brothers and sisters take the future into their own hands and play a major role in fighting dictators. We saw the exact same thing in Egypt.

However, I do not believe that we should take a piecemeal approach. As far as I am concerned, Canada's foreign policy should not be dictated by a military operation. The military is both necessary and important because it is the strong arm of our democracy, but policies must be determined by Foreign Affairs. That is why we have always provided constructive criticism about certain aspects of the Afghan mission. When it comes to Libya, a piecemeal approach will not work. We need a diplomatic and humanitarian strategy so that the Libyan people can take the future into their own hands. We have an international responsibility, along with other countries, to support the people and civilians who are suffering.

● (1800)

That is why we completely agree. We have said so from the beginning. We have called for the imposition of a no-fly zone since the start of the violence.

I think that we must do much more. I agree with my colleagues who have said that, obviously, the Libyan people must take their future into their own hands. We need to be there to support governance and to give them tools to establish their own democracy. There is no room for ethnocentrism. We must not impose our own values and our way of life. There are universal democratic and humanitarian values. We have always said that we must not give people fish; we must teach them to fish. We must give them the tools they need. It will cost money. In its strategy, the government must not say that it will send planes and that this will just be a military operation. We will have to ensure that we give these people development tools so that they can take charge of their own transition.

That is our role, that is how we do things, how we see things as Canadians. Regardless of the government, I believe that the only way this has a chance of being successful is if we are there to provide support. We are not there to replace. We are there to support. If we want to help the Libyan people, the first thing we must do is support these military missions and play a role. I have a hard time saying that in three and a half months, we will withdraw. We do not know what will happen in three and a half months. Hopefully things will go well during that period, but what is important is for Parliament to hold a new debate if, after three and a half months, there are still problems. I think we have to be realistic.

This is not peacemaking. This is peacekeeping. We can always interpret chapter 7 or chapter 8 on humanitarian missions, if necessary, but we do not want to relive what happened in Rwanda. We need to give this a chance.

In terms of diplomacy, there is also a geopolitical reality to consider, since it is not just Libya. Libya has borders. Tunisia and Egypt are also in turmoil. Their reality, what they are learning, must also be considered. The people there are taking control of their own destiny and a new reality is emerging, since the dictators will be judged or have been arrested.

That is why we must ensure that, in each mission, the most important things are the three D's: diplomacy, development and defence. We have already talked about this. Our mission should be based around this notion, in order to make sure it can work.

Government Orders

Canada has a role to play. Realistically speaking, Canada has certain capabilities. We have always been quite strong, for I recall some of our concrete actions, and not just in Afghanistan. There was also Haiti. We have made important contributions in several countries. Canada has a role to play in governance, in assistance, in support for governance and in terms of development tools for democracy, but we also have an important role to play in the International Criminal Court. We cannot allow these crimes to go unpunished. We need to ensure that Gadhafi pays for what he has done.

I hear people talking about a regime change versus just protecting civilians. There is a fine line. The most important thing is stopping the horrors that are taking place right now. It is completely deplorable and unacceptable that rape is being used as a weapon of war, as in Congo. It has even been said that Gadhafi gives his soldiers Viagra. It is completely unacceptable. We must ensure that these actions do not go unpunished.

We will have a role to play in the transition. We will have a role to play in terms of the International Court. I see my colleague, one of our greatest former justice ministers, who played a key role in the creation of the International Criminal Court.

• (1805)

We must ensure during the transition, if we want to give these people a chance, that crimes do not go unpunished. We must absolutely play a role in that regard.

We are going to work constructively and co-operatively with all parliamentarians in order to fully play our role.

• (1810)

[*English*]

I guess we are not seeing everything that is going on in the field. A lot of stuff is happening there. I hope we put partisanship aside and that, as Canadians, we will play our role of citizens of the world. We cannot just allow dictators like that do what they do without taking our own responsibility.

The global village is there now. There are no more boundaries, no more frontiers, and we have a role to play. The Canadian way is the triple D, as I said. It is diplomacy, development and defence, and we just cannot go at the menu à la carte saying that we will do one and then the other. If we had that way of doing things, people would not be on side.

We need to send a clear message. I was very pleased to hear my colleagues from the official opposition also say that we are there for the citizens, the civilians, to ensure they are protected. That is our role. Whether we are a member of the Security Council or not, we have a role to play as a country.

[*Translation*]

Those were the few words I wanted to say on behalf of my constituents in Bourassa. I wanted to give my opinion on a situation that, unfortunately, is a reality in a number of countries. Obviously, we will address them one at a time. It is important to add that the Liberal Party of Canada stands in solidarity—the word “solidarity” is important here—with all parliamentarians to protect people and ensure that dictators like Gadhafi can never be in this position again.

The diplomatic reality is such that we do not always understand how things happen on the ground, but the primary objective is to ensure that we can protect the civilians, protect the people and make the world a better place. It is our responsibility, in our Canadian democracy, to play this role. I thank the government and all parliamentarians for playing this role today. This is an important debate for Canada.

[*English*]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to reiterate now that, this morning, the Minister of International Cooperation made the announcement of another \$2 million going into humanitarian aid to Libya, \$250,000 of which is to go toward helping women and girls who have been the victims of gender-based violence.

I wonder if the hon. member, who condemned, as all of us have, that kind of use of violence as a tool of war, could comment on how this \$250,000 will assist these women and girls, particularly in Libya.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Madam Speaker, today it is not a matter of saying that we have given a certain amount. There must be zero tolerance. Not only must we invest money, but we must also ensure, when international treaties or conventions are signed, that we are capable of fully carrying out our responsibilities. I am thinking of child soldiers, for example. We sign treaties, but I sometimes feel that we just go through the motions of supporting them. I am not speaking about a specific government, but in general terms.

Yes, we do have to invest money and ensure that we are not just cutting a ribbon or writing a cheque to feel good. But there must also be follow-up. When we attend meetings of the UN Security Council and sign a treaty or convention, we must be able to implement it in order to prevent such events from happening again. We must thus push back the limits of impunity. There must be zero tolerance. In this process, there is no room for ethnocentrism, and the Libyan people must take charge of their destiny through the national transitional council. They must also ensure that, in future, the rights of women will be respected, the ravages of war will be prevented, and efforts will be made in terms of the culture. They must ensure that such situations do not happen again.

We must be very careful. We are pleased that the government is investing money, but it is not just about the money. Resources are not all about money. This is also about the will to make change and how to go about it, and the resulting political work. One day, we will no longer be there. The cameras will no longer be focused on what is happening in Libya because there will be another problem somewhere else. And when we have forgotten, other things will happen. Just because we are withdrawing from Afghanistan and are proud of what we have accomplished there does not mean that no more horrors will take place.

Government Orders

How can we ensure that there is follow-up? That is the diplomatic and multilateral role of Canada in international institutions. It is the duty of any self-respecting government to ensure that we do more than just give money. Furthermore, we cannot say that the cheque is in the mail because Canada Post is on strike. There must be substantial follow-up, we must work more closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs, make good use of our diplomats, and work with our NGOs in gathering intelligence and taking action to protect the people.

●(1815)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Bourassa for sharing his comments with us and for presenting such an informative speech.

He agrees with everyone here that we need to support the people of Libya in their transition. He emphasized the three D's. We have different ways of expressing this concept, but the Canadian government needs to co-operate with other governments and use all available tools.

There has been some discussion today regarding governance, an area that tends to fall between development and diplomacy. It is part of both and cannot be separated from either. How does the member think a country like Canada could support the creation of new civil institutions in Libya? Should it be through our existing institutions? Can he think of a new approach that can be used to reach the objective he talked about in his speech?

Hon. Denis Coderre: Madam Speaker, I think that governance should be a matter for the Department of Foreign Affairs; this is a diplomatic matter. There are several ways we can go about it, but there is one thing I would not want to see. At one point, in Afghanistan, National Defence had a committee specifically under the CDS, which advised Mr. Karzai. That is not the role of National Defence, in my opinion. It has a role to play, but that is not it. It has done things well in military terms, but when it comes to governance it is important that this really be under the auspices of Foreign Affairs.

I am in favour of multilateralism. We can work with the United Nations, and Canada can provide support for a mission organized by the UN. That has been done in several cases in the past, particularly with MINUSTAH, in Haiti, where we played a supporting role in relation to governance, reconstruction, justice and all that. There may also be bilateral agreements between Canada and Libya.

Canada must play an even more important role in the Arab world. Governance in Libya is important, but things have been done in Egypt by our former colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We will have to do things in Tunisia, for example. I do not understand why we have not yet frozen the assets of Ben Ali's brother-in-law.

We have to face certain facts, and this will call for a hybrid approach to things. One thing I know, however, is that Canada has a reputation when it comes to democracy and governance. Canada can very certainly play a role, in relation both to existing institutions and to establishing a bilateral strategy.

●(1820)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to see, in the manner in which this motion has come before us, the support for both the subamendment and amendment.

I ask the question of my colleague posed by a previous speaker, who indicated that after three and a half months, we should be looking at pulling out of Libya, at least that is what was being implied.

Does my colleague believe that this would be advisable for the federal government? What potential impact would something of this nature have, if we were to take the advice of that particular member?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Madam Speaker, we have to be realistic. If the government says it is conducting its mission and pulling out three and a half months later, it will never work. However, if it co-operates with the foreign affairs critics and if we could be updated on this issue as it develops, that would be different. I would not want us to make a hasty decision without seeking permission from Parliament. We must not decide, after three and a half months, that it is time to pull out.

We do not know what is going to happen in three and a half months. It will go by quickly. Will Gadhafi still be there? According to some, we were supposed to be rid of him, but there have been many bombs since the beginning. There is even talk of civil war. The United Nations has a role to play. The right thing to do is to have another debate here before making any hasty decisions.

I understand that for political reasons the NDP is against NATO. Some NDP MPs wanted us to pull out of Libya immediately and "keep our powder dry", as they say. Let us talk first and adopt the right policy. What we want above all is to protect the civilians, the people of Libya. After that, we will hold another debate, but we must not pull out too quickly.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues who have spent the better part of today debating what I believe to be an absolutely important discussion for us to undertake as parliamentarians.

Any time we consider the actions of any government going to war, the responsible thing for the government to do is to go to the Canadian people and ask for their permission to act on their behalf.

Today we have seen the commitment of our Prime Minister realized in this House. The Prime Minister made it very clear during the last election, as he has over his time as prime minister, that he would continue to act on behalf of Canadians but only with the permission of this House when it comes to going into a combat or conflict zone. So it is really a privilege for me to stand and be part of this discussion undertaken by members of all parties in this House.

Government Orders

Today I had the opportunity to go to the Holocaust memorial service held at the war museum here in Ottawa. I heard from representatives of many of the parties in this House. The unifying theme of all the speeches given by all of the party leaders and representatives of different parties was that we must act to help those who are the most vulnerable in their time of need. There was even a reference by the leader of the Green Party to Canada, to a certain extent, having failed the Jewish people by coming in so late.

If there is one thing that we Canadians never want to do, it is to come late to the rescue of those who are the most vulnerable in our world. As we look at the Libyan people today, especially the women and children, I cannot think of a more vulnerable population that we as Canadians have an opportunity to advocate on behalf of.

We Canadians did go to Libya, first and foremost, to protect the civilian population that had seen its own government attack the most vulnerable in the country. We are there in collaboration with our NATO partners and under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973.

This House did unanimously agree that we must bring forward sanctions. We brought them forward, and all parties agreed. As members of this House, we also endorsed military action in Libya.

I think it is important for us to remind ourselves why we did that. We did see the horrific reality of the Libyan military attacking the most vulnerable in its own country, a government attacking its own people.

In history when we have seen this happen, we have known there was little opportunity and little chance for the civilian population to move out of a conflict like that unscathed or prepared to see freedom happen. That is why it is so important that we are there today and that we continue and complete the mission we set out to do, which is to protect the most vulnerable.

Since the conflict started, we have heard of alleged acts of sexual violence by the Gadhafi regime against those who are most vulnerable in Libya. Those include the attacks on women and children and the use of rape as a tool of war.

Any time in world history when we have seen regimes use this type of weapon of war, we have understood that the effects of this will not just be short term in the country but long term.

As we hear of the realities of that, we cannot even imagine them. I am a father of two young girls. I cannot imagine what I would do to someone who came to brutally rape my daughters or my wife. However, we realize there are fathers and husbands at this moment who are being hauled off and slaughtered in some cases. In other cases, they are standing there helpless, unable to care for or protect their children and wives.

● (1825)

That is why we as Canadians have the responsibility, when we hear the reports of this, and have the ability and the tools and the strength to go in there and free those people, to do everything in our power to do that.

Our Prime Minister did act swiftly when we saw what was happening in Libya. From the outset, the Prime Minister did push for

swift and decisive action not only here in Canada but also in the international community. The reality is that without that swift action, far worse conditions would have developed. We as Canadians, having advocated swift action and gone in there, now have a responsibility to carry through with the action the House endorsed.

The reality is that much of what we went in there to help solve remains. The Gadhafi regime is still there, actively warring against its own people, which speaks to our responsibility to continue to advocate on behalf of those who are the most vulnerable in Libya.

When we consider what we have to do, we realize there is the military component in which we are engaged, as this Parliament knows well, but we must also continue on both the diplomatic and humanitarian sides. Our ministers have spoken about the contributions this government has made on the humanitarian side. That is important as well.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., pursuant to order made Monday, June 13, 2011, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Motion No. 1 under government business.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment to 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 five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1855)

[*English*]

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 4*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Ashton
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bateman
Bennett

Adams
Albas
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Angus
Ashfield
Aspin
Aubin
Baird
Bellavance
Benoit

Government Orders

Benskin	Bevington	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Bezan	Blanchette	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney	Mourani	Mulcair
Block	Boivin	Murray	Nantel
Borg	Boughen	Nash	Nicholls
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Norlock	Nunez-Melo
Brahmi	Braid	O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Breitkreuz	Brison	Obhrai	Oliver
Brosseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Opitz	Pacetti
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)	Papillon	Paradis
Bruinooge	Butt	Patry	Payne
Byrne	Calandra	Pécelet	Penashue
Calkins	Cannan	Perreault	Pilon
Caron	Carrie	Plamondon	Poillievre
Casey	Cash	Preston	Quach
Charlton	Chicoine	Rae	Rafferty
Chisholm	Chisu	Raitt	Rajotte
Chong	Choquette	Rathgeber	Ravignat
Chow	Christopherson	Raynault	Regan
Clarke	Cleary	Reid	Rempel
Clement	Coderre	Richards	Richardson
Comartin	Côté	Rickford	Ritz
Cotler	Crowder	Rousseau	Sagamash
Cullen	Cuzner	Sandhu	Savoie
Daniel	Davidson	Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Schellenberger	Seeback
Day	Dechert	Sellah	Sgro
Del Mastro	Devolin	Shea	Shpley
Dewar	Dion	Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	sor)	
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeshen	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Smith	Sopuck
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Sorenson	St-Denis
Dusseau	Dykstra	Stanton	Stewart
Eyking	Fantino	Stoffer	Storseth
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Strahl	Sullivan
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Sweet	Thibeault
Fortin	Freeman	Tilson	Toet
Fry	Galipeau	Toews	Toone
Gallant	Garneau	Tremblay	Trost
Garrison	Genest	Trottier	Truppe
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Turmel	Tweed
Gill	Glover	Uppal	Valcourt
Godin	Goguen	Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Goldring	Goodale	Van Loan	Vellacott
Goodyear	Gosal	Wallace	Warawa
Gourde	Gravelle	Warkentin	Watson
Grewal	Groguhé	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Harper	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Weston (Saint John)	
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Wilks	Williamson
Hassainia	Hawn	Wong	Woodworth
Hayes	Hiebert	Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Hillyer	Hoback	Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 294
Hoepfner	Holder		
Hsu	Hughes		
Hyer	Jacob		
James	Jean		
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway	May- — 1	
Kenny (Calgary Southeast)	Kent		
Kerr	Komarnicki		
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Nil	
Lamoureux	Lapointe		
Larose	Latendresse		
Lauzon	Laverdière		
Layton	Lebel		
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)		
Leef	Leitch		
Lemieux	Leslie		
Leung	Liu		
Lizon	Lobb		
Lukiwski	Lunney		
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)		
MacKenzie	Mai		
Marston	Martin		
Masse	Mathysen		
Mayes	McCallum		
McColeman	McGuinty		
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod		
Menegakis	Menzies		
Merrifield	Michaud		
Miller	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)		
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)			
Moore (Fundy Royal)			

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the subamendment carried.

The next question is on the amendment, as amended.

● (1905)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 5*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)

Government Orders

Allison	Ambler	Masse	Mathysen
Ambrose	Anders	Mayes	McCallum
Anderson	Angus	McColeman	McGuinty
Armstrong	Ashfield	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Ashton	Aspin	Menegakis	Menzies
Atamanenko	Aubin	Merrifield	Michaud
Ayala	Baird	Miller	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Bateman	Bellavance	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Bennett	Benoit	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Benskin	Bevington	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Bezan	Blanchette	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney	Mourani	Mulcair
Block	Boivin	Murray	Nantel
Borg	Boughen	Nash	Nicholls
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Norlock	Nunez-Melo
Brahmi	Braid	O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Breitkreuz	Brison	Obhrai	Oliver
Brousseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Opitz	Pacetti
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)	Papillon	Paradis
Bruinooge	Butt	Patry	Payne
Byrne	Calandra	Péclet	Penashue
Calkins	Cannan	Perreault	Pilon
Caron	Carrie	Plamondon	Poilievre
Casey	Cash	Preston	Quach
Charlton	Chicoine	Rae	Rafferty
Chisholm	Chisu	Raitt	Rajotte
Chong	Choquette	Rathgeber	Ravignat
Chow	Christopherson	Raynault	Regan
Clarke	Cleary	Reid	Rempel
Clement	Coderre	Richards	Richardson
Comartin	Côté	Rickford	Ritz
Cotler	Crowder	Rousseau	Saganash
Cullen	Cuzner	Sandhu	Savoie
Daniel	Davidson	Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Schellenberger	Seeback
Day	Dechert	Sellah	Sgro
Del Mastro	Devolin	Shea	Shimley
Dewar	Dion	Shory	Simmis (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeshen	Smith	Sopuck
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Sorenson	St-Denis
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Stanton	Stewart
Dusseau	Dykstra	Stoffer	Storseth
Eyking	Fantino	Strahl	Sullivan
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Sweet	Thibeault
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Tilson	Toet
Fortin	Freeman	Toews	Toone
Fry	Galipeau	Tremblay	Trost
Gallant	Garneau	Trottier	Truppe
Garrison	Genest	Turmel	Tweed
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Uppal	Valcourt
Gill	Glover	Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Godin	Goguen	Van Loan	Vellacott
Goldring	Goodale	Wallace	Warawa
Goodyear	Gosal	Warkentin	Watson
Gourde	Gravelle	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Grewal	Groguhé	Weston (Saint John)	
Harper	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Wilks	Williamson
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Wong	Woodworth
Hassainia	Hawn	Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Hayes	Hiebert	Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 294
Hillyer	Hoback		
Hoepfner	Holder		
Hsu	Hughes		
Hyer	Jacob		
James	Jean		
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway		
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent		
Kerr	Komarnicki		
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	May- — 1	
Lamoureux	Lapointe		
Larose	Latendresse		
Lauzon	Laverdière		
Layton	Lebel		
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)		
Leef	Leitch		
Lemieux	Leslie		
Leung	Liu		
Lizon	Lobb		
Lukivski	Lunney		
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)		
MacKenzie	Mai		
Marston	Martin		

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment as amended carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

*[English]***Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the vote, with the Conservatives voting yes.

Government Orders

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will be voting yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Massimo Pacetti: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will be voting in favour of the motion.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc will be voting in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting no.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 6)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams	Garrison	Genest
Adler	Albas	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Albrecht	Alexander	Gill	Glover
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Godin	Goguen
Allison	Ambler	Goldring	Goodale
Ambrose	Anders	Goodyear	Gosal
Anderson	Angus	Gourde	Gravelle
Armstrong	Ashfield	Grewal	Groguhé
Ashton	Aspin	Harper	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Atamanenko	Aubin	Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Ayala	Baird	Hassainia	Hawn
Bateman	Bellavance	Hayes	Hiebert
Bennett	Benoit	Hillyer	Hoback
Benskin	Bevington	Hoepfner	Holder
Bezan	Blanchette	Hsu	Hughes
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney	Hyer	Jacob
Block	Boivin	James	Jean
Borg	Boughen	Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway
Brahmi	Braid	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Breitkreuz	Brisson	Kerr	Komarnicki
Brosseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Bruinooge	Butt	Larose	Latendresse
Byrne	Calandra	Lauzon	Laverdière
Calkins	Cannan	Layton	Lebel
Caron	Carrie	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Casey	Cash	Leaf	Leitch
Charlton	Chicoine	Lemieux	Leslie
Chisholm	Chisu	Leung	Liu
Chong	Choquette	Lizon	Lobb
Chow	Christopherson	Lukiwski	Lunney
Clarke	Cleary	MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
Clement	Coderre	MacKenzie	Mai
Comartin	Côté	Marston	Martin
Cotler	Crowder	Masse	Mathysen
Cullen	Cuzner	Mayes	McCaullum
Daniel	Davidson	McColeman	McGuinty
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Day	Dechert	Menegakis	Menzies
Del Mastro	Devolin	Merrifield	Michaud
Dewar	Dion	Miller	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeschen	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mulcair
Dusseault	Dykstra	Mourani	Nantel
Eyking	Fantino	Murray	Nicholls
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Nash	Nunez-Melo
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Norlock	O'Neill Gordon
Fortin	Freeman	O'Connor	Oliver
Fry	Galipeau	Obhrai	Pacetti
Gallant	Garneau	Opitz	Paradis
		Papillon	Payne
		Patry	Penashue
		Péclet	Pilon
		Perreault	Poillievre
		Plamondon	Quach
		Preston	Rafferty
		Rae	Rajotte
		Raitt	Ravignat
		Rathgeber	Regan
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		Schellenberger	Sgro
		Sellah	Shipley
		Shea	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
		Shory	
		Shor	
		Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
		Smith	Sopuck
		Sorenson	St-Denis
		Stanton	Stewart
		Stoffler	Storseth
		Strahl	Sullivan
		Sweet	Thibeault
		Tilson	Toe
		Toews	Toone
		Tremblay	Trost

Trottier	Truppe
Turnel	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
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Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 294

NAYS

Members

May — 1

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1910)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada recently tabled two reports concerning our international climate change obligations.

The first report detailed our federal climate change policies and their impact on meeting Canada's international obligations under the Kyoto protocol. That report very clearly affirms that the Conservative government has absolutely no plan when it comes to climate change. The report shows that once again the government's inaction will see our country miss our own completely inadequate climate change goals by 75%, if it can be believed. The goals are inadequate to start with, and then we are going to miss them by 75% in 2020.

This report also shows government stalling on implementing some regulations, for example, renewable energies content or energy efficiency standards. This has resulted in even lower emissions reductions than we had planned. I would say that clearly climate change is not a priority for the government.

It was not mentioned in the throne speech. It was not mentioned in the budget. The upcoming budget cuts will only undermine Environment Canada's ability to address climate change. The 2011 main estimates show a 20% cut to Environment Canada, including a 59% reduction in spending for climate change and clean air.

The second report was our national inventory report to the UN about where our emissions come from. Nowhere in here can we find where our emissions are or what kind of emissions we have with regard to the oil sands. In this report, emissions from the oil sands were not explicitly listed, but if we looked hard enough we could find them. We could figure it out and we could see the data showing that there is a 20% increase in oil sands emissions in 2009 alone. No

Adjournment Proceedings

wonder it is not specifically listed. No wonder it is hidden. As I pointed out earlier in the House, that amount is actually more than the emissions of every single car in Canada.

I would like to know, who made the decision to try to hide this very important information on greenhouse gas emissions from the oil sands productions?

• (1915)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite on her election and her appointment to the environment file. I look forward to working with her in the future.

First, it is important to note with regard to the government's plan for climate change that Canadians actually had an opportunity to consider the NDP's climate change platform in the last month, during our election, and it was soundly rejected. Our plan, the best plan for it, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sector by sector, aligning with the U.S. where appropriate.

With regard to our reporting requirements, our government has been compliant with our international reporting guidelines in this area. That is why this year has been no exception. We have met our reporting deadlines and Canada has not once been found to be out of compliance for finalizing our submissions.

The UNFCCC report that the member referred to and the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act are two different reporting mechanisms with which our government was compliant, posting our UNFCCC response within the allowable grace period, and we were in compliance.

Our government is taking strong action on climate change. We have a clear plan to meet our committed Copenhagen accord in a sector by sector approach which is well underway. What is really important to note is that our plan is to partner with industry in developing regulations to reduce GHG emissions without jeopardizing the fragile economy as it recovers from our recent economic downturn.

Canadians elected our government because they know our path is the right one, going forward on climate change. Our plan is also not reliant on industry alone. Our government is taking action on mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, including important investments in climate science.

I look forward to working with the member opposite to work constructively with our government as we move forward toward meeting our Copenhagen targets.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Madam Speaker, as it is the first time I have had the opportunity to hear my colleague in the House, congratulations to her on her election and also for her appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

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The report shows clearly that sector by sector is absolutely not working. This is not a plan for climate change. The Conservatives have a plan and it is not working. The information in this report was hidden. Emissions from the oil sands went up, and to top it off, we were late in reporting. After a tsunami and earthquake, Japan managed to report on time and we did not. It is unbelievable.

Considering the dismal failure for us in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and the fact that we cannot even get a report together that makes sense and where we can find clear information, how can we possibly trust the government to take its climate change obligations seriously?

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, it is important to note that there was no hidden report. The breakdown in emissions originating from the oil sands sector in 2009 is captured in several categories, including fossil fuel production and refining, mining and oil, gas extraction and fugitive sources. It is in the report.

I want to emphasize that we have a very strong plan going forward. Our government has a strong plan to ensure both environmental sustainability and economic sustainability.

Through consultation with industry and other levels of government, we will continue to regulate all major sources of emissions within that context of balancing environmental sustainability with economic sustainability.

SENIORS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for taking the time to respond to questions on the very important matter of funding decisions regarding seniors and the poverty that is the reality of life for far too many older Canadians.

On June 7, I asked the Minister of Finance to explain why the government chose corporate tax giveaways over raising every senior in this country out of poverty, opting to give the poorest seniors a mere \$50 a month in guaranteed income supplement increases. The parliamentary secretary for the minister responded that seniors expected this increase, that she hoped I would support it and that she wanted to address the needs of seniors.

I have no doubt that seniors will appreciate this modest increase in GIS. When one lives in poverty, every extra dollar eases the heavy burden of trying to manage.

However, the needs of our country's seniors are not being met and will not be met by this miserly increase in the GIS. Though this raise may in some small way help our seniors meet the increasing costs of living, it will not raise them out of poverty. Ending poverty must be the goal of any government that claims to have the best interests of its citizens at heart.

A quarter of a million of Canada's seniors live below the poverty line. They struggle to afford basics like food, housing and prescription medication. After spending their lives working to build our country, we have failed them by not providing for them as they once provided for us.

It is not as though the government has not had the opportunity to make changes in the lives of our seniors. The government found \$668 million in the budget for the G8 summit, billions for corporate

tax giveaways and \$50 million for perks, such as the gazebo in a minister's riding, but it strangely was unable to find \$700 million to raise every senior in Canada above the poverty line.

It would seem that the government refuses to prioritize the needs of our seniors over other more corporate or personal interests.

My question is straightforward. If the government truly wants to address the needs of seniors, why has it so far refused to take every opportunity to take the necessary actions to raise all seniors out of poverty?

• (1920)

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, our Conservative government recognizes that Canada's seniors helped build our amazing country. Many of those seniors actually live in my riding of Simcoe—Grey.

That is why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan introduces key measures to improve the quality of life and expand opportunities for Canada's seniors.

Some of these initiatives include enhancing the government income supplement, GIS, for low-income seniors with increased benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples. This is an initiative the Canadian Association of Retired Persons has said that it was, "very happy to see....this issue has been an issue that we have raised many times before and it is finally something that is being addressed".

Also included in these initiatives are: enhancing the new horizons for seniors program with an additional \$10 million to promote volunteerism, mentorship and expanded awareness of elder abuse; extending the targeted initiative for older workers with an additional \$50 million; keeping transfer payments to provinces and territories at record highs, ensuring they can provide the health care and social programs seniors depend on; and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees to give seniors who want to remain active in the workforce the freedom to make that choice, unless there is an occupational requirement.

As the Canadian Taxpayers Federation noted, "People have a right to determine how long they work, and this", eliminating the mandatory retirement age, "is a major step towards eliminating poverty for seniors".

During the recent election, Canadians seniors, especially in my riding of Simcoe—Grey, reviewed the next phase of Canada's economic action plan and what it proposed for them. Canadian seniors gave the Conservative plan a strong endorsement on election day, providing the government with a strong mandate to support seniors. Now is the time to move forward on that plan.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan builds on the over \$2 billion in annual tax relief our Conservative government has provided to seniors since 2006, including: introducing pension income splitting; increasing the age credit amount by \$2,000; doubling the pension income credit to \$2,000; increasing the amount of GIS recipients can earn through employment without any reduction in GIS benefits, from \$500 to \$3,500; increasing the age limit for RRSP to RRIF conversion to 71 from 69; establishing the landmark tax-free savings account, which is particularly beneficial for seniors; and much more.

Indeed, through our strong record of tax relief, over 85,000 seniors have been removed from the tax rolls completely since 2006.

Rest assured, our Conservative government is and will continue to stand up for seniors.

• (1925)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Madam Speaker, it is easy for Conservatives to stand in the House of Commons and say that the government has done much to improve the lives of seniors and that there have been many measures introduced to try and ease the economic burden that our seniors carry.

The truth remains, however, that these measures have not been enough and we continue to fail senior citizens. I cannot stress enough that despite the work of the past years, over a quarter of a million of Canada's seniors continue to live in poverty. The small gains in benefits that the government has granted them has not changed this fact.

The government had several opportunities to change that reality, but instead choose to spend money in a frivolous manner. If, for

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example, the government had made a few conference calls instead of hosting a \$668 million photo op, every senior in our country could be living above the poverty line right now.

Once again, why did the government refuse to take the opportunity to lift every senior in our country out of poverty?

Ms. Kellie Leitch: Madam Speaker, let me reiterate that our Conservative government has been given a strong mandate because of its strong record of supporting Canada's seniors and we will continue to advance their interests in the years ahead.

Indeed, just today, we introduced legislation to implement the enhancement to the guaranteed income supplement promised in budget 2011. Provided this legislation passes in the days ahead, this will provide increased payments to more than 680,000 vulnerable seniors beginning July 1 of this year.

As the C.D. Howe Institute has recently observed:

—the new Guaranteed Income Supplement...top-up benefit for low-income seniors would bring a meaningful increase in benefits too low-income seniors.

I urge all parliamentarians to work with our government to support Canada's most vulnerable seniors.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:27 p.m.)

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