

proposed holding elections in which the Palestinian people would be able to make their views known clearly, elections that could be a step on the way to breaking the cycle of violence and leading to a just and durable peace.

[English]

The creation of the State of Israel is one of the epochal events of this century. For Canadians, Israel is not simply a place on the map. Israel is a tribute to the deep spiritual beliefs and the unfailing personal courage of a remarkable people.

Israel is a monument to the indomitable spirit of man.

Chers amis, colleagues, it is with great pride that I present to you the President of Israel whom I now invite to address the Parliament and the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

His Excellency Chaim Herzog (President of Israel): Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons, Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons, Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your very kind personal remarks about me. As I heard you, I recalled the comment of the late President Lyndon Johnson on a similar occasion. He said: "My father would have been pleased. My mother would have believed it."

You, Mr. Prime Minister, have been a tried and trusted friend of our people and of our country over the years. As a statesman of world stature and as the Leader of this great country, you are highly respected in our country as elsewhere, and I look forward to your comments and observations on the current situation with great interest.

It is my privilege to reiterate publicly our invitation to you to come to our area and to honour us with your presence in Israel.

[Translation]

You understand how moving it is for the President of Israel, a people with thousands of years of history and a young democracy reborn, after centuries of struggle and prayer, to have the privilege today to address your

illustrious assembly, which is witness to the most exciting aspect of the Free World.

I am very touched on this first presidential state visit in the annals of Israel-Canada relations by the honour these two Houses have granted my people, with all it means in terms of dreams, accomplishments and hopes.

[English]

As a fellow democracy, we are proud of the fact that despite five wars, despite the defence and economic burden which it has borne since its inception, Israel has never compromised on the issue of its basic values. Like you, we have never known one minute without democracy. Our democracy faces the most involved challenges—a constant state of readiness, long military and reserve service, and the complex problems arising out of the refusal of our neighbours to enter into negotiations for peace with us, and to understand that we do have the right to live in the area and in our country.

Too often are our problems viewed facily out of the context of all that is happening around us in the Middle East. In this decade the longest war in this century has been waged in the Persian Gulf—a brutal bloody war motivated by fanatic religious fundamentalism on the one hand, and the ambitions of a megalomaniac dictatorship on the other hand. Tens of thousands of prisoners were shot on both sides out of hand. An unconventional weapon, poison gas, was introduced, and the world stood by in mute helplessness. The number of those killed and wounded was in the millions.

How blind were the so-called experts in analysing the developments in our area. The obsessive fixation with every stone-throwing incident in the West Bank led to a situation whereby the real ominous developments in the Middle East and the real threats to Western interests were overlooked by most observers. Thus again and again the Western World was taken by surprise when the real focus of danger erupted. How can we forget how the free world was taken by surprise by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, by the Khomeini revolution in Iran, by the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war?

It is against this background that we must view the sole bastion of democracy in our region—Israel. A glance at the map of the Middle East must surely emphasize the vital significance for the security of the free world of this