

the circumstances, particularly given the legitimate American concern over the escalating threats to American citizens in Panama, people who had a right to be there, and a right to be protected.

Secondly we made the point, very clearly, that intervention by force is a dangerous precedent, and we note that the United States relied on force only in the last resort, only after the failure of attempts to resolve the situation in Panama peacefully.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question is, what now? What now occurs, what now should be done? I want to mention three things that I think should be on our minds as we try to look forward. One is that we have to work and use all of the influence and standing of Canada to ensure that intervention not become a precedent. There were unique factors here, and if they can justify actions that were taken early this morning by the United States, it is their uniqueness that justifies them. There is not a precedent established here that this parliament or this country would approve in other circumstances.

I think that this, sir, is a particularly important assurance to be given to the people and to the government of Nicaragua, where elections are imminent, and where every effort must continue to make those elections free and make those elections fair.

Secondly, we believe it is important that we help the government that was elected in May in Panama to establish stability and democracy in that country. That was the theme, I can tell members of the House, in many of the consultations I had today by telephone with Latin leaders of the Organization of American States. They are interested in taking advantage of the opportunity that has been created now to try to sink some of the roots of stability and of democracy that will be important if Panama is to assume its place of significance in a region where those qualities have come to be more evident and more valued. We intend to send a team of Canadian officials to Panama, as soon as that would be productive, to see if there are specific ways in which Canada can contribute to that process.

And thirdly, I think there is a lesson here of the real need to strengthen the regional institutions in Latin America, particularly in Central America. It's clear that the Organization of American States, despite its efforts, didn't work in Panama. They were not able to achieve the peaceful