

reasons has occasionally made use of that Act cumbersome and difficult. The passage of special legislation, such as the Iran Economic Sanctions Act, takes time. Opportunities to effectively influence the outcome of a crisis can thus be lost. Other legislation, such as the Emergencies Act, was never intended for the application of international economic sanctions and is in fact of very little use. Measures that are within the discretion of the government can be useful in some circumstances, but they would likely be neither a sufficient nor an appropriate response to the unacceptable behaviour of another state.

In the past, we have been able to make do with a limited ability to impose international economic sanctions, but that is no longer the case. The world has changed. Not only has the end of the Cold War created these new opportunities for concerted international action that Canada and other countries must seize, the character of international economic relations and the structure of economic transactions have also changed. In the past, relatively effective sanctions could be applied by merely controlling trade in goods. Today, however, trade in services accounts for an ever larger part of international transactions. In addition, in an age of electronic banking, huge sums of money and other assets can be moved from one country to another almost instantaneously. Bill C-53 addresses these new developments and in its provision for controlling trade in technology, for example, a very important element in today's international exchange, it tries to anticipate others yet to come.

When I speak of these changes, I am referring to situations that are very real. After the coup d'état in Haiti, the ad hoc meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of American States urged OAS member states to embargo trade with Haiti and to freeze Haitian state assets. Canada, however, found itself with only limited authority to block financial transactions involving Haiti and to freeze Haitian state assets in Canada. Had the Special Economic Measures Act been in force when the coup took place in Haiti, Canada would have been better placed to respond quickly and effectively to the OAS request. Indeed, Canada had led the OAS in calling for strong economic measures against Haiti, and it is therefore, of course, doubly important that we are in a position to follow through.

With the legislation in place, we will be able to better respond. Embargoes are not always easy to apply. That said, we are concerned that some OAS members, including the United States, apparently appear to be backing away from giving full effect to the OAS resolutions. That reluctance can undermine the effectiveness of sanctions, and it makes it difficult for countries like Canada to sustain the sanctions when others are not sharing the burden. We want to implement measures that will contribute to the return of constitutional government in Haiti. We urge our fellow members to do likewise, as well as other countries. This action was a breakthrough for the OAS, and, in our view, it is very important that we act as member states in concert.