

S.O. 30

zations, rule of law and rule of reason. We must try to use this event and build upon it to bring about even an enhanced and more important sense of it.

● (2120)

I am surprised in part by the Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party who have often expressed those kinds of feelings, whether it be on Central America or on arms control, who have stood for those kinds of principles. They seem to have forgotten that in the words and tone of the resolution which they have presented to us. They have forgotten the critical element, that if we are going to prevent that almost instantaneous spark of conflict which has occurred between the civil, peaceful world and the military world of war, we must provide some protection, some buffer and some rules to make sure that it does not happen again.

I regret very much that the resolution does not contain that spirit, that sense of feeling which we must build upon. We must use our position as a respected member of the international community to do something further.

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Axworthy: I will come to that because I believe there are a number of initiatives which should and will be taken in order to say that this lesson will not be ignored but will be built upon.

Of course, one of the first opportunities is to address the issue of how effective and valuable are the international rules which now prevail in the area of civil aviation, or, indeed, has the level of danger, the threshold of jeopardy, been raised so high between the increase in armament and the increase in military security to a point where the commerce and traverse of international aviation is now constantly running about to that particular jeopardy?

As we know, in 1944 the Chicago Convention signed the International Civil Aviation Agreement which required of all nations to establish certain rules of behaviour about themselves and their neighbours, about how planes would fly, one to the other. Most Canadians may not recognize that Canada was one of the pioneers in establishing that rule of law in international flight, that many other countries refused to recognize many of the fundamental freedoms which were established under that convention. Perhaps the most important freedom of the air which was established in 1944 was the freedom of overflight, the right of a plane of one nation to have access over the air rights of another nation in order to go to another destination, a convention which we had signed as a full signatory and which the Soviet Union refused to sign. It was one of the few nations that did not put its pen to the paper to say that it was prepared to recognize that freedom of overflight, that freedom of access.

There is an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to begin to redress some of those neglects of the past perhaps, because on Tuesday of next week, beginning in Montreal, by coincidence, there is the meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization. At that meeting we will have the opportunity as a country,

which we intend to do through the initiative of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and myself, to bring to that assembly a number of representations as to how we must carefully re-examine the rules and procedures as they relate to civil aviation and determine whether they are sufficient to deal with that new threshold of danger which was so vividly brought home to us just a few weeks ago.

There are a number of technical questions which must be asked. One of the questions which bothers me most, in the way I hope it would bother other Hon. Members, is that voice in the mind which says: "How could it be that a commercial airline straying off course would conduct itself for a period of two hours over hostile territory, followed by fighter aircraft of the Soviet Union, and somehow there was not a recognition and realization on both parts that a horrible mistake was about to be committed and that something had to be done to pull back from that brink of tragedy?"

If you look at some of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, if you go back into the questions of verification and identification, why is it that one pilot cannot radio to another? I mean, how do you wiggle your wings at 3 a.m. in the morning when it is pitch black outside? How do you establish a sense of identification and communication? Where are the rules which establish the proper procedures to ensure that that fighter aircraft pilot and the commercial airline pilot are in some sense of communication? Where does the responsibility lie? Is it on the ground with the controllers? Is it in the air with the two pilots? Surely that question must be asked and must be faced by all members of the international community to ensure that this will not happen again. I believe that is one of the opportunities which must be faced by this country and by all Canadians, because I believe we have a responsibility to represent that particular point of view.

Therefore, while we properly and without question should be expressing the deep concern of the people most fundamentally affected, the families of the victims of that tragedy, and expressing indignation at the transgression of some basic precepts of international civility and sanity, we must also ask some questions about how we can best construct an improved system in the area of civil aviation so that that enormous world which has been opened to us does not begin to shrivel and shrink under the fear and sense of tyranny of the unknown.

In terms of the initiatives which this Government has taken, Mr. Speaker, the suspension of Aeroflot flights into Mirabel, it was quite deliberately chosen because it was carefully within the boundaries of the jurisdiction of civil aviation itself, which clearly brings home the argument that the whole question of reciprocity, of one country being able to exchange its passengers and travellers with another, has to be held in abeyance until that issue is resolved, and the rules established for that particular sense of communication and travel.

The statement made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs clearly articulated the requirement that until answers are forthcoming, explanations given and responsibility acknowledged, we will not lift that suspension but will in fact continue it. I believe we have provided a sense of leadership