

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

As the good Chairman, who was all too kind to me in his introduction, was introducing the guests at the head table it struck me -- really the first time that this has struck me about an audience -- that it really should be the audience that he was introducing. When I look around me and down there -- at least before when I could still see, before these lights were in my eyes -- I not only saw many old friends, but many distinguished people, foremost among whom was the Honourable Roland Mitchener and his wife. It's a great honour for me, sir, to have you in the audience today when I speak on our foreign policy.

This is an occasion that I've looked forward to for quite some time. I didn't realize the tradition was so unbroken, but I wanted to come in any event. The only thing that surprises me about the occasion is the modernistic contours and appearance of this lectern, but certainly it's very much in keeping with my subject which -- although I don't call it that -- is, in a sense the future of our foreign policy.

I understand that I follow by just a week a distinguished member of my service, Mr. Ken Taylor. It was a particularly appropriate time, I think, for you to have him because of the events which have been occurring in the last several days which have, really, among many other things, brought foreign policy to the top of everyone's mind.

We, as you know, have stood by the United States in their time of difficulty. I pay tribute to the former government for the way in which they assisted the United States in Tehran, and Mr. Taylor personally. Our policy has throughout been entirely supportive of that of the United States, and indeed of international law and of civilized society.

We are profoundly grateful and pleased that those 444 days of captivity have ended, that the captives have been released, and that at least that part of the crisis has ended. We will at some time in the next year or so re-establish most of our normal relations with Iran, but they're not a priority for us. Like other countries in the West, we will shortly be ending our sanctions because those were imposed only for the period of the holding of the hostages, but with respect to the return of the Canadian diplomatic representatives to Iran, we will certainly want to be certain that they will be safe when they return.