

Madame Deputy Speaker

I am very pleased to lead off the debate today on Bill C-53, an Act to provide for the imposition of special economic measures.

Now that the "Cold War" is over, we are living in a period of unprecedented opportunity to enhance international peace and security. Countries are rethinking the way they have conducted international relations for the past 45 years. The international community is looking for new and effective ways to maintain international peace and security with minimal recourse to military force.

The responses of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) to the Gulf and Haitian crises have highlighted the new opportunities for collective measures to suppress acts of aggression and respond to internationally unacceptable behaviour. It is in this context that the government has introduced Bill C-53, an Act to provide for the imposition of special economic measures.

The purpose of Bill C-53, is to enable Canada to impose a broad range of economic sanctions against a state, or a part of a state, whose actions pose a serious threat to international peace or security, or fail to conform to accepted standards of behaviour. The Act will improve Canada's ability to join other states promptly and effectively in the application of economic sanctions.

The application of economic sanctions will remain an exceptional measure, but it is an essential foreign policy instrument. There are occasions when other peaceful means, such as diplomatic representations, public condemnations, various *démarches* will not bring a delinquent state or a rogue regime to modify its behaviour. In these circumstances, the ability to join promptly in the application of multilateral economic sanctions is both valuable and necessary.

The use of economic sanctions, of course, is not new to Canadian foreign policy. On a number of occasions over the past 25 years, Canada has joined like-minded states in resorting to economic sanctions for one reason or another. For example, comprehensive sanctions were applied against Rhodesia in 1968 and against Iraq in 1990. A United Nations mandated arms embargo against South Africa was established in 1977, and more extensive economic measures were applied in 1985 and 1986. Limited sanctions were applied against Iran and the Soviet Union in 1980, Poland and Argentina in 1982, Libya in 1986 and Haiti in 1991.

These instances have revealed that our domestic authority to impose sanctions is not appropriate to the current situation. We have seen, for example, that disagreement among the permanent members of the UN Security Council regularly made it impossible to use the United Nations Act to apply sanctions. The Export and Import Permits Act only permits restrictions on trade in goods. Moreover, the requirement for an inter-governmental arrangement or commitment in order to control imports for foreign policy