

In fact, Mr. Speaker we have just decided to advise Canadians to leave Beijing now. Our Embassy will be assisting them in making their departure. I will of course keep the House advised if we decide to proceed with a complete evacuation.

With respect to bilateral actions that we might take in response to the crisis, we have already deferred or cancelled all events that were planned in the immediate future.

We have postponed the signing of a series of memoranda of understanding on development assistance projects which were to be signed later this week.

We have suspended nuclear cooperation consultations which were to proceed early next week and we will be taking similar action with respect to other scheduled negotiations and discussions. We are advising the provinces and non-governmental organizations with planned consultations with Chinese counterparts to follow suit.

Although there are no high-level visits in either direction planned for the coming few weeks, we would deflect such visits until a more appropriate time.

At the multilateral level, I have asked our Ambassador to the United Nations in New York to begin immediately consultations with other U.N. members, and with the Secretary General, means by which the moral suasion of the United Nations might be brought to bear to support the voices calling for moderation and restraint in China. Canada fully supports the statement issued by the Secretary General today calling for restraint.

With respect to the large numbers of Chinese students in Canada - I believe there are some forty-five hundred here at the moment - I am sure it is a most troublesome time. While we trust that before long the situation in China will no longer be repugnant to them, we understand their concerns. As my colleague, the Honourable Minister for Employment and Immigration announced earlier, we will be sympathetic to any requests for extending their stay until calm returns to their homeland.

My colleague has also taken steps to suspend, for at least a two month period, all removals to China under the terms of the Immigration Act.