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Parliament to think more deeply about foreign affairs and to think about the principles that define a country. That, of course, is flawed a bit by this feeling of tremendous distaste and concern for the violence that is sweeping the Middle East.

I would like to share with the House by way of introduction to my comments a preliminary conclusion I am drawing from the travels of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations as it deals with matters of this sort. I am finding that Canadians are perhaps more than ever before feeling vulnerable to international events. They are feeling more captive of what is happening outside of Canada than ever before. I am not speaking simply of commodity or oil prices or of trading arrangements but of international terrorism and arms control. This feeling of vulnerability is a strong one. I would like to speak to that tonight and explain how I feel that what the Government is doing is trying to come to terms with that.

The second major conclusion I believe anyone would gather after travelling the country and listening to Canadians talk about international relations is the paradox that Canadians seem to be rather ambitious about what Canada can do in the world; we feel vulnerable but there also seems to be an insistence that Canada should act and try to help in what seems to be intractable conflicts around the world. There is a feeling of vulnerability but also, curiously, a feeling that Canada can do something. I believe both feelings are responded to in what the Government is trying to do in this tragic situation.

First, dealing with vulnerability, we find ourselves, together with virtually all members of the world community, grappling with the increasingly alarming and seemingly intractable problem of international terrorism. This terrorism is arising from the tensions and conflicts of the Middle East. Canadians have not been unaffected by this cruel scourge of our time. We need only remember the hijacking of the Egyptian aircraft in Malta which led to the death of two innocent Canadians, a mother and her young son. We cannot deplore strongly enough such terrible events and the increasing threat to all international travellers. That is a vivid, sad reminder of our vulnerability. Nevertheless, it is clear that terrorism is not an irrational phenomenon. To analyse it as being simply the work of madmen is deceiving. No, in our view, it has its roots in deep political conflicts. It will not be eradicated until these conflicts are addressed and resolved.

Clearly, the Canadian Government is deeply committed to doing all it can to assist efforts to find political settlements which will reduce the tensions and frustrations which lead to desperate and cruel acts of terrorism and which will enable the countries and peoples of the Middle East to live together in peace. At the same time, even in our pursuit of these political settlements, we recognize the necessity for firm actions to deter those who would use terrorism to their own ends. I repeat, we recognize the necessity for firm action to deter those who will use terror as an instrument of state policy.

As a member of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations, I was privileged to preside over an extremely productive panel on international terrorism held in Fredericton last month. In that peaceful town, it seemed strange to be speaking about terrorism. However, we had a vivid and very useful discussion of that subject and I commend it to the House as reported in issue 46 of the committee proceedings. As I indicated then, it is my view that if we are going to be constructive internationally, we will have to become more tough minded. Canadians cannot simply retreat behind sentiments and vain hopes. We have to analyse toughly and be willing to take tough actions.

One of the conclusions of the panel discussion was that while most international terrorism is politically motivated and sometimes the result of political grievances which we recognize to be genuine, nonetheless acts of terrorism try to force compliance with political demands through violence and murder.

● (2300)

Whatever the motivations, these acts must be unequivocally condemned. It was unanimous among the panelists and among members of the committee. Indeed it became clear in that discussion that terror is not an abstraction. It is a psychological strategy and a physical strategy. This being so, it must be responded to not only psychologically with words but with physical reply at times. In addition, we found that terrorist organizations, whatever their original political objectives, tend to become self-sustaining. This is the terrible irony of terrorism. Over time, some terrorist organizations become increasingly less concerned with the political solution which presumably led to their formation in the first place and start to jockey for prominence and try to intimidate more than other terrorist groups. While the resolution of tensions such as those in the Middle East may well help to reduce the level of terrorism, it remains essential for the international community to take firm and courageous stands against terrorist acts so that these organizations will not proliferate or start to develop a life of their own almost independent of chances for a political solution.

At the conclusion of that day's discussion, it seemed to be clear to all those who participated that it was state-inspired terrorism, terrorism which is encouraged and perpetrated by Governments, that is particularly offensive and really calls for the clearest response. In fact, it may be the form of terrorism with which one can come to terms because at least one can communicate with a Government.

Following that discussion and following our examination as a Government in the last two years, there have been clear actions. Canadians are ambitious about what Canada can do in the world. They are insistent that it do something to protect its own citizens. I would argue that the Government has done this. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) announced a number of economic measures against Libya because of our deep concern that that Government was actively involved in