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nations. For instance, we greeted with satisfaction Egypt's decision to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, and the will shown since then by the Egyptian Government to abide by the treaty.

For its part, Jordania has long been seeking a formula of co-existence with Israel and has shown leadership in all endeavours to that end. During his recent visit to Jordania, our Secretary of state clearly expressed his appreciation concerning King Hussein's efforts to promote peace.

On several occasions Canada also expressed its concern about the civil war in Lebanon. We sincerely deplore the untold sufferings this conflict continues to inflict upon the Lebanese people, and did not spare any effort to lessen their plight by regularly providing emergency humanitarian assistance to Lebanon. Canada has often voiced support for Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, particularly before the UN General Assembly in the fall of 1984. We sincerely wish that a genuine and lasting national reconciliation will soon enable the Lebanese people to live in peace again.

The ongoing Irak-Iran war is also an issue which gives us great concern. Canada spoke in favour of a peaceful settlement of that conflict, to the extent that we readily endorsed all international efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and made representations to both sides urging them to show moderation. We have placed an embargo on our arms shipments to both warring parties, who have been urged to avail themselves of the good offices of the U.N. Secretary General. We have also protested against the international human rights violations that continue to arise from this war.

Mr. Speaker, in making its positions clear on the conflicts that are raging in the Middle East, Canada's sole concern is to promote peace. We want an end to the suffering and misery caused by war and violence. We want a return to peace, a precondition for all economic and social development.

At this point, I would like to reiterate the feelings of friendship we, as Canadians, have for the Arab nations. The isolated actions of a single government will not be allowed to cloud our perception of the grandeur of their civilization, nor to diminish our desire for substantial and cordial relations with these countries.

Mr. Speaker, even in this hour of crisis, I remain confident that moderation and the brotherhood of man will prevail.

● (2140)

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I do not particularly relish intervening in this kind of debate this evening. It has been a rather sad 24 hours, sad for the world in general in view of the fact that a major power, indeed a superpower, has seen fit for whatever reason to launch a pre-emptive military strike in a part of the world that is a tinderbox of political conflict and, in some areas, in political chaos. No one yet knows, and we will not know for a long time, all of

the ramifications that can flow or possibly will flow from the action taken at Tripoli just about 24 hours ago.

It is late in the day to be entering into debate. We should face the fact that we are basically debating in the dark, both literally and figuratively, because we do not have all the facts at our disposal. What little we have comes largely from news reports, and most of these reports come from the United States.

We have the public statements of American officials, President Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defence Weinberger. We also have one short press release from the Prime Minister's office, and some rather circumspect answers from Question Period today; all in all very little hard information.

Certainly all Members of this House share my concern for the safety and security of Canadians presently resident in Libya and, indeed, all people resident from foreign countries in that state. We feel helpless that we can do so little at this hour to ensure their safety. If we feel helpless and ill informed, just think how Canadians in Libya feel this evening. They have even fewer sources of information at their disposal. What sorts of questions might they be asking themselves? They know, of course, there has been an armed attack by the United States.

When exactly did the Government of Canada learn the nature and details of the U.S. action in Libya? Were we consulted before the pre-emptive strike? Was Canada merely informed of the mission to be carried out? What was the Government's immediate reaction? Did our Government initially disagree with the information given it by the special envoy? Did we encourage or attempt to dissuade the United States? Did Canada present any other options for the U.S. to consider? Did the Government do anything to ensure the safety of its citizens in Libya before the air strike last evening?

I cannot help but recall the era in which I grew up in this country, the era of Pearsonian diplomacy when Canada made every effort to be an active peacemaker. We did not go in lock step every time a major power made a move. That established Canada in world fora as a cautious, reasonable country, concerned more about peace than scoring military brownie points or launching full scale vengeful type or pre-emptive type military strikes.

I am not blaming the United States entirely at this hour for what it did. I do not know what the evidence is. I do not think any Member sitting in this House knows the evidence that existed and on which the American military strike was based. We can only go by those reports and those statements on television last night and what little information has come to us today.

For example, I would like to know when the Prime Minister first learned the exact time of the attack. Only the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) have the answers to these questions. The Prime Minister has suddenly become as tight-lipped as his friend across the aisle. We know