what we have always said was fundamental -- their right to choose their own leadership in the search for realization of their legitimate rights.

As I said in Jerusalem to the Prime Minister of Israel, we are among the closest friends of that country and will not let it be put at risk. As the Prime Minister said on February 8th, and as President Bush said a week ago, there is no security in geography.

I also went to Iran, Mr. Speaker.

My meeting with President Rafsanjani was productive. Of course, we discussed problems -- human rights and hostages, for example -- but we did so in a way which gave me hope we can work well with Iran.

These countries are all neighbours of Iraq. They are not disinterested in the outcome there of the uprising. Indeed, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have brought together, in Lebanon, the leaders of the various groups representing the masses of people wishing to be done with Saddam Hussein's tyranny, not just the Shiite majority in the south, and the Kurdish minority in the north, but others as well. We have always said that the future of Iraq is up to the Iraqis.

Mr. Speaker, I have been encouraged by all the leaders I spoke with. They do want a durable peace in the region. They are, however, not yet ready to move beyond the liberation of Kuwait to address the age-old problems on which they have been so long divided, except with wariness and distrust. But move they must.

Or the arms race will spiral.

And the United Nations will lose the lustre of its concerted action to liberate Kuwait.

That would be our common loss.

Mr. Speaker, by its nature, this is an interim report to the House, and I will be coming back to the Standing Committee as early as next week.

My conversations last week gave me a more direct understanding of attitudes in a region whose conflicts are deep and dangerous. They reinforced Canada's ability to play a constructive role in calming those conflicts, and in using the end of a war to begin a real peace. I know that all Members of this House share our commitment to that goal.