

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday in Chicago the U.S. Secretary of State argued in favour of an aid package that would be better targeted and better co-ordinated by western countries. Mr. Christopher also said that to achieve this a meeting of Group of Seven finance ministers and foreign affairs ministers should be held as soon as possible.

Would the Prime Minister agree that this meeting should preferably be held before the meeting between President Yeltsin and President Clinton, and that it would be advisable to try and organize a meeting early next week to pave the way for the meeting scheduled between the two presidents in Vancouver or Moscow?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of what was said by Mr. Christopher yesterday in Chicago.

• (1420)

Perhaps I may point out to the Leader of the Opposition that on May 21 last year I said the following at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and I quote: "I believe that so far the west's collective response has been hesitant and timid and certainly not commensurate with the needs and opportunities that are out there". I was referring to a collective response by the west to the problems of President Yeltsin and to opportunities in the former Soviet Union. That was my government's position a year and a half or two years ago, and it still is today.

In fact, earlier today I received a call from President François Mitterand of France who shared this opinion and who believes, as I do, that the problem is a complex one and that if there is a change of plan with respect to a bilateral meeting, it may be useful for G-7 members to consider a meeting of heads of government or heads of State. The problem is so important and so complex that it requires political leadership by heads of government. That is President Mitterand's position and it is also the position of the Canadian government.

[English]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

I would like to know from the Prime Minister if it is the intention of the Canadian government to make sure that there will be a linkage between the aid packages and the maintenance of a democratically elected government in Russia.

We would like to know if the aid will be linked to democracy or separated. It is very important to know so that there will be pressure on the people in Russia to make sure that they maintain a democratically elected government in that country.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the link must be direct, evident and ongoing. In the same speech at Johns Hopkins University at the commencement exercises on May 21, 1992 I indicated that it was time to unite the people of the former Soviet Union with democrats everywhere.

The first step is to complete the integration of the countries of the former Soviet Union into the global economic system. This refers to IMF, World Bank membership, the creation of stabilization funds, individual technical assistance programs, and the coming together of the G-7 with a view to dealing with this fundamental problem.

My friend and I have discussed in the past how much Canada, the United States and other G-7 countries would have paid had the leader of the Soviet Union said 15 years ago: "I am ready to get out to disband the Warsaw pact. We are going to facilitate the unification of Germany. We are going to bring about a democratic system in Russia and the Soviet Union and end the cold war".

What would the G-7 countries have been ready to say at the time? They would have said: "How much can we provide, when and where?"

The absence of this kind of response is why I said at Johns Hopkins that the western collective approach thus far had been timid and lacking in daring and responsibility. I think the time has come, even at this late hour, for us to respond in the manner suggested by my hon. friend with a profound linkage to democratic institutions and democracy itself in Russia as best exemplified by the