

Mr. Speaker, as soon as the military strike against the civilians in Tiananmen Square became known to us on Saturday we made clear our abhorrence at the unnecessary and indiscriminate use of force being used against unarmed students and citizens. As the events unfolded and the extent of the violence and the killing became clear, we called on the Chinese Government in the strongest possible terms "to urgently and immediately take steps to stop the aggressive and senseless killing by its armed forces". Yesterday at noon I had the Chinese Ambassador called in to underline the seriousness with which we viewed the situation and to ensure that he passed to his authorities our call for a stop to the killing and the depth of our outrage.

We have not been alone in calling on the Chinese leadership to stop the carnage and to return to peaceful methods to resolve their political crisis. Most western governments, governments from around the world, even Communist parties in other countries, have joined in condemning the brutality of the methods chosen to clear Tiananmen Square and to crush all and every expression of dissent by the students and other civilians once the military action had begun.

Although we have not been asked, and indeed such a request may be unlikely, the Government remains ready to offer humanitarian assistance or medical supplies if needed.

In assessing the actions which should accompany our condemnation of the violence and the killings, we must bear in mind the need to safeguard Canadian lives as well as the need to build pressure on the Chinese Government.

At the time of the outbreak of violence, there were approximately six hundred Canadians resident in China, roughly half of whom were in Beijing. In addition, there were a number of business visitors and tourists scattered around the country. Our first concern, because of the violence, has been the security of those in the capital. As a precautionary measure in case of further military action against the universities, our embassy evacuated all Canadians from the city campuses, and is currently providing temporary accommodation to the seventy-five or so students affected. We are in constant contact with our Ambassador, Earl Drake, and we have contingency plans for the evacuation from Beijing for the students, other Canadians, and the staff of the Embassy should it prove advisable. We have put into place arrangements whereby aircraft can be made available to us at short notice for evacuating Canadians to nearby Asian cities, and onward transportation arrangements are being explored.