

Mr. Speaker:

I know that I speak for all Members of the House when I express the Government's profound regret that open war has broken out in the sub-continent of India.

General hostilities erupted between India and Pakistan last Friday. Each government has accused the other of having started this latest stage in their tense confrontation which began some eight months ago. Reports of the fighting are contradictory. It seems fairly clear that neither side has yet heavily committed its forces on the western front: in and around East Pakistan, however, Indian forces are exerting considerable efforts to gain territory. India has recognized the provisional government of Bangla Desh.

An emergency session of the United Nations Security Council was called Saturday evening on the initiative of nine of its members to consider the deteriorating situation. It met again on Sunday and will meet also this afternoon. A number of resolutions have been presented but no consensus is yet in sight. Our ambassador at the United Nations is in close touch with events there and is keeping us informed. It is our hope that the Security Council will find enough common ground to be able to act decisively. In the absence of such action, it will be necessary to consider what the General Assembly could achieve.

The safety of Canadian citizens on the sub-continent has been very much in our minds this weekend. In India, there are some 1,100 Canadians registered with the High Commission in Delhi. More than a month ago, those living near the border with Pakistan were advised to consider moving to a safer location. In East Pakistan there are forty. In the early hours of this morning, at the request of the Secretary General of the United Nations, a Canadian Armed Forces C130 aircraft was diverted to Dacca, to help in the evacuation of United Nations personnel. It was intended that it should also be available to any Canadians who might not have left earlier, Commonwealth citizens and other nationals. Although a local ceasefire had been arranged by the United Nations with the Pakistani, Indian and Mukti Bahini forces which would permit the aircraft to land at Dacca, that airport was attacked at precisely the hour our aircraft was to begin its approach to the area. The aircraft returned to Bangkok safely. We trust that with renewed assurances of another local ceasefire, we shall have better success tomorrow.

In West Pakistan, where 270 Canadians are registered at the High Commission in Islamabad, those responsible on the spot have not yet concluded that action is necessary. Some time ago, Canadians in the Lahore area were advised to consider moving and it was suggested to those in Karachi that they should be prepared to leave at short notice. Yesterday nine Canadians arrived in Teheran on a commercial flight from