

Mr. Speaker,

I rise to report on a matter of national security.

On the Government's instructions, a senior official of the Department of External Affairs informed the Soviet Ambassador on June 15 that seven Soviet officials were to leave Canada within 48 hours, and that one official, who was then outside Canada, would not be allowed to return to this country. Those seven officials left Canada on June 17. A further nine Soviet officials, who had already left Canada on completion of their assignments, were declared persona non grata and will not be permitted to return to Canada. Mr. Speaker, with the consent of this House, I will now table a list of the names of the Soviet officials concerned, and the Soviet establishments in Canada where each worked.

The Government acted after thorough investigations and analysis which led us to an inescapable conclusion that the Soviet officials concerned had engaged in unacceptable activities which were a threat to the security of this country. I do not intend to provide details of these activities except to say that some appeared designed to secure clandestine access to classified information or sensitive technology with commercial or military application. Another operation was intended to penetrate the RCMP security service and subsequently the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I am confident Canadian security was not compromised. Investigations are continuing into a number of the cases in question. I am confident that Canadian authorities have acted to preserve our security, and know the House would want me to express our appreciation to those authorities.

The 17 Soviet officials were not engaged in a single, large conspiracy. Several unrelated Soviet operations, which were the subjects of parallel but distinct investigations. The investigations were complex and occurred over time. Last Tuesday, the Government decided to take action on all the cases at once, to bring them to an end.

Honourable members may be aware of speculation concerning a Soviet national, formerly working at the secretariat of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal. I can now confirm that Mr. Yuriy Smurov has decided to apply to remain in Canada, together with his wife and daughter. His application is now being considered by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. Mr. Smurov has provided information which, I understand, has been helpful to our security authorities. I am not prepared, however, to enter into details.