

APPENDIX

ADDRESS

of

HIS EXCELLENCY BORIS YELTSIN

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION OF RUSSIA

to

Both Houses of Parliament

in the

HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER, OTTAWA

on

Friday, June 19, 1992

His Excellency Boris Yeltsin was welcomed by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, and thanked by the Honourable Guy Charbonneau, Speaker of the Senate and the Honourable John A. Fraser, Speaker of the House of Commons.

[English]

Hon. John A. Fraser (Speaker of the House of Commons): Order, please. The Right Honourable the Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, *chers collègues, mesdames et messieurs*. We are here today to celebrate the state visit to Canada by the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Boris Yeltsin. We are here, as well, to launch a new era of peace and partnership between peoples too long divided.

Fifty years ago this month, diplomatic relations were opened between Ottawa and Moscow. Diplomatic relations between us were born, as it turns out, of absolute necessity during the darkest days of the Second World War. Europe then lay in subjugation and Russia lay under the darkest siege.

I have stood before the War Memorial in St. Petersburg in the brutal cold of winter and I have listened to the winds whisper silently of great tragedy and enormous human loss in Russia. I have visited cemeteries from Dieppe to Sai Wan Bay and I have heard courageous veterans mourn fallen comrades sacrificed in the defence of liberty and democracy against the very same enemy.

[Translation]

The establishment of diplomatic relations at that time was both an act of defiance toward those who wanted to destroy us and an act of hope for better days. We indeed finally defeated our common enemy, but our relations drifted into the great desolation of the cold war. We found ourselves facing each other in a new struggle, a war waged not on the plains of central Europe or in the jungles of Asia but in the hearts and minds of men and women throughout the world.

This war as well is now over; the victory was won not by one army over another but by fundamental values and powerful ideas to which all can adhere.

[English]

Obviously, Mr. Speaker and fellow Canadians, the largest measure of the credit for this unique opportunity that now opens down the vistas of years must be given to President Yeltsin.

Courage is an abstraction to those at a relatively safe distance. But as it turns out, President Yeltsin was given no such latitude.

In the crucial days of last August on the top of a tank, at immediate risk to his own life, he dispatched the tyranny that had held Russia in the grip of fear and arbitrary power for 70 years.

The image of Boris Yeltsin last summer and his defiant message to the enemies of democracy everywhere, particularly in his own country, will remain as an historic symbol of courage and purpose so long as men and women gather in free Parliaments to defend the cause of liberty. And I tell you, Mr. President, all Canadians salute you for the extraordinary courage that you have demonstrated.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: President Yeltsin's success was the success fundamentally of the human spirit. His beneficiaries are us all.

Mr. President, you have offered us friendship and you have challenged us to join with you in bringing your country into the community of free nations. I know that I speak for every member of this House and that, sir, is a most rare occurrence.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: As I told you, sir, on both sides of the House, all of them are active supporters of mine.