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Canada has long had ties with China. Many Canadians owe their living to our trade with China, to having a window open on the Pacific. Our country is becoming increasingly involved in Trans-Pacific affairs. In addition, the Chinese-Canadian community adds an important dimension to our interest in China. I know that many members of this community have relatives in China, and I share their concern for the well-being of those relatives. What is happening there cannot be held indifferent to Canada and Canadians. The efforts of the media to draw our attention to what is happening in the People's Republic of China and the response of Canadians have shown that distance does not dim our concern.

We think it is very important to secure the safety of the Canadian community in China. We are monitoring the situation very closely—it is our priority concern—in co-operation with our embassy in Beijing and our consulate general in Shanghai.

We are relieved to hear that the necessary measures have been taken to ensure the safety of Canadians in China.

We are also setting a priority on re-examining our bilateral relations with China to ensure that the Chinese authorities have a clear understanding of our concern regarding the human rights situation in that country.

• (2150)

The events of the last few weeks showed that the students' protest movement was greatly debated by the Chinese leaders. When the demonstrations began, the Chinese government handled the students' discontent with great restraint. How unfortunate it is that the caution of the early days gave way to brute force; how unfortunate it is that negotiation was ruled out in favour of guns.

Human rights and fundamental democratic rights are at the centre of Canada's foreign policy, wherever these values are threatened. We cannot let the events of the last few days in China go by in silence. I know that all Hon. Members here today share my anguish at the suffering of the students and citizens of Beijing.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I had the privilege to know one of these Chinese students who had chosen to learn French as a second language as a way to learn about the western world. French was a difficult language

for this student, who had also been able to obtain a training position with a firm of consulting engineers. He was eager to learn, full of intellectual curiosity and wonder at everything going on in our world. The symbolism of the Statue of Liberty on Tiananmen Square seems to me to represent this curiosity and this desire for independence and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, in unequivocally condemning this brutal use of force against the peaceful people of Beijing and asking the Chinese authorities to stop this senseless killing immediately in order to begin dialogue with the Chinese people without delay, the House of Commons of Canada did not speak lightly. We are a peaceful people. We are a people who do not necessarily have a tradition of interfering in the communities or internal affairs of other countries. But the action taken by the Chinese Army is something that we cannot tolerate and for this reason, Mr. Speaker, I felt I had to rise this evening to join my colleagues in the House and denounce this decision of the Chinese government.

[*English*]

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, it is with deep concern and outrage that I participate in this emergency debate this evening. In the past two days, we have witnessed a remarkable and a tragic thwarting of democracy in China. Nearly two months ago, students first gathered in Tiananmen Square to call for democratic change in their country. Their demonstration was peaceful and courageous. They caught the attention of the world; they captured our hearts; and they spoke for repressed people around the world.

As events unfolded in the Square, I remembered the visit that I made to Tiananmen Square just one year ago. In April 1988, I participated in the inaugural China Airlines flight between Toronto and Beijing. When I visited Tiananmen Square, I marvelled at its size and its openness, and I shared a sense of history that as a Canadian I was visiting China at a remarkable time in history. But, as I watched the tanks roll into Tiananmen Square over the weekend, crushing the barricades erected by the students and firing on defenceless people, I sat horrified and despondent, horrified at the senseless slaughter of innocent people and despondent about the future course for China.