

Oral Questions

What has changed is Saddam Hussein did not take advantage of that pause for peace. What has happened is that the brutal aggression that took place on August 2 and the occupation of a country and the destruction of a people continuing.

The United Nations and the issue of collective security has to be enforced. The opposition can make decisions that are not responsible. Unfortunately, this government has a position to make and it must be responsible. We accept that responsibility. God help Canada if his party ever has to make that responsibility.

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BALTIC STATES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

As world attention remains focused on the gulf crisis, the tension in Lithuania and the other two Baltic states increases by the day.

At the opening of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Malta yesterday on the peaceful settlement of disputes, and I repeat, the peaceful settlement of disputes, I was pleased to learn Canada made a statement condemning the crackdown in Lithuania, calling for a restraint on further violence.

I ask the minister: What recommendations did his government make to the conference? If he has not already done so, will he pledge to increase humanitarian aid in the form of medical supplies and/or food directly to Lithuania and to the other states, as already requested by many Canadians of Baltic descent?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that even in the teeth of the grave crisis we face in the gulf the hon. member and other members of the House would cause the Parliament and public of Canada to focus again on what is happening in Lithuania, actions that are entirely unacceptable to us.

That has been communicated to Soviet authorities by a letter from the Prime Minister to Mr. Gorbachev and by the eloquent and I hope effective resolution adopted unanimously by the House yesterday.

With regard to medical supplies, we are prepared to do everything we can. We have had conversations with members of the Baltic communities in Canada, the Baltic communities in their entirety, not simply Canadians of Lithuanian origin. We will speak with others.

We will do everything we can to continue to ensure, because the hon. member knows that we were able to get medical supplies in earlier, that medical supplies get in. There may be some new limits on our capacity. There will be no limits upon our will.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Secretary of State for External Affairs and his party and members of all three parties for giving unanimous consent to the resolution that we passed in this House yesterday.

There is a fear that similar military action that occurred in Lithuania will soon occur in Latvia and Estonia. Will the minister confirm today if he has sent a strong message directly to Moscow that Canada will view such action as totally unacceptable, that such action would have dire consequences for the relations with the Soviet Union and could rekindle the east-west cold war, which none of us want?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that was certainly clear in the letter that was sent by the Prime Minister to Mr. Gorbachev.

As the hon. member will know, there is now a new foreign minister in the Soviet Union who has been to Canada, whom I have met and I think others have met. I will be in touch with him shortly, and among the points I will be making will be precisely the two points the hon. member has raised: first, our concern about that unacceptable behaviour extending to other Baltic republics; and, second, the inescapable fact that if the Soviet Union continues upon that path with regard to the Baltic States. That is bound to have an impact upon not only the official policy of this government but also the attitude toward the Soviet Union and toward the goals of reform articulated by Mr. Gorbachev that had been so strongly supported by so many Canadians of eastern and central European origin, of origin in the Soviet Union, including the Baltic peoples. But those peoples, those Canadians, cannot be expected to support an idea of reform by an administration that carries out activities of the kind we have seen in Lithuania.