

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 11 September 2002  
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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## Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 11 September 2002

(Afternoon)

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** I welcome to lead today's time for reflection the Rev Johnston McKay, of the religious affairs department of the BBC.

**The Rev Johnston McKay (Editorial Consultant, Religious Broadcasting, BBC Scotland):** A Scottish postgraduate student at Brown University in New York wrote just after 11 September last year:

"Everyone in the city has a World Trade Centre story, and everyone you talk to tells you their story, or the story of their friends. By degrees of separation you hear so many narratives, spread across the city, and it doesn't matter any more whose they are. It was one friend's wedding anniversary. Another friend was on the subway when it happened, going to Brooklyn, and probably underneath the World Trade Centre moments before it was hit."

She goes on to list many more stories.

Some of the stories about 11 September were too painful for some of us to bear, even two thousand miles and a split second on television away. The stories of messages of love sent by mobile phone from the doomed aircraft were the ones that some of us stopped listening to, not because they were too powerful, but because they were too personal and too poignant.

The journalist Aaron Hicklin, looking back on 11 September, said in a television programme that what happened changed the way that New York perceived itself. He said:

"Before September 11<sup>th</sup> there were lots of divisions and subdivisions. There were people who thought you needed a passport to go into Queen's. After September 11<sup>th</sup> only one thing mattered: were you here or were you not here on September 11<sup>th</sup>."

We were all there.

One of the glimpses of hope that has emerged from the events of exactly a year ago is that because we were all there, and because we all have our accounts of where we were when we heard the news, 11 September has become our story. It is the story of Scotland's being linked in real and imaginative compassion with New York.

An incident, event or story of human suffering anywhere in the world that becomes the story of

people around the world can become for us all a glimpse of hope, because anything that creates—for however brief a time—unity in this fragmented world, and that can provide, however imaginatively, a symbol of compassion in what is so often a callous world, is a gesture of defiance against the wild anger that led to 11 September.

It is by refusing to despair and continuing to hope that we deny victory to people of violence.

## Point of Order

14:34

**Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I gave you prior notice of my point of order in relation to your decision not to select the amendment that was lodged in my name and which was signed by seven other back benchers from four different political parties. Given the level of support for that amendment and the fact that you have chosen an amendment that deals with the same topic—a potential attack against Iraq—but from a distinct perspective that many of us could not support, do you accept that you could be denying members of the Scottish Parliament a free vote and the opportunity to vote in accordance with their consciences on one of the most important issues that face Scotland today? Will you reconsider your decision and allow the Parliament to vote on my amendment at the end of business today?

**Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West):** Further to that point of order, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** The debate is heavily oversubscribed, so all time spent on points of order takes time from the debate.

**Dennis Canavan:** Sir David, you have not selected John McAllion's amendment despite the fact that it has the declared support of twice as many members as John Swinney's amendment, which has been selected. I ask you please to reconsider that decision, which will deprive the Parliament of the opportunity to have a democratic vote in principle for or against war in Iraq. If you are unwilling to change your decision on this occasion, please consider giving members the opportunity for such a democratic vote in the near future, so that the people of America can know what the people of Scotland's representatives think.

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank John McAllion for giving me notice of his point of order. That enables me to draw the attention of members to the ruling that I gave on 16 November 2000 on the procedure for selecting amendments. I draw that to members' attention so that they can study it; I will not read it all out again.

On the first point, I say that because John McAllion's amendment was supported by members of different parties, that automatically made me inclined to call it. I assure the chamber that I do not believe that amendments should be totally in the control of the party business managers. However, I have to think very carefully about the content of amendments and the purpose of the debate. There are many members in the

chamber who think that neither amendment should be called and there are others who think that both amendments should be called. I understand both points of view.

I have given the matter careful thought and there is a dividing line—admittedly a thin one—between the two amendments and I have decided to select Mr Swinney's amendment and not Mr McAllion's. I am afraid that that is a responsibility that is placed on me. I will ensure that representatives of those who signed John McAllion's amendment will be called to speak in the debate.

Finally, the debate is heavily oversubscribed and members of every party are going to be disappointed that they cannot be called. I suggest, therefore, that we begin the debate and that members study my previous ruling in the *Official Report*.

## Scotland's Links with the USA

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** We turn now to the debate on motion S1M-3368 in the name of Jim Wallace, on Scotland's links with the USA, and one amendment to that motion.

14:37

**The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace):** We are all mindful that today's debate on Scotland's links with the United States of America is taking place on the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC, and of the deaths of those who were aboard the hijacked plane that crashed in Pennsylvania.

On behalf of the Scottish Executive, I reiterate the profound sense of shock and sorrow that was felt in Scotland when our American friends and colleagues were struck by that appalling tragedy. Today's debate is an opportunity to underline once more the solidarity that the Parliament and the Executive feel with the United States, as we look back together on the events of one year ago.

I believe that the debate is also an opportunity to look forward. There is much comfort and hope for the future for the United States and Scotland to draw from the ever-strengthening links between our two countries. It is in that spirit that we debate today's motion, which asks:

"That the Parliament notes the educational, historical, cultural and economic links between Scotland and the USA and wishes to see these developed and enhanced to the mutual benefit of both countries."

In the Executive's view, today of all days is not an appropriate occasion on which to debate the foreign policy and military issues that are alluded to in the amendment that was lodged by the leader of the Scottish National Party. Of course, I acknowledge that the issue of Iraq is of widespread concern across all parties and all communities in Scotland. Indeed, Mr Swinney could have chosen that issue for debate in his party's allocated time tomorrow.

As the issue of potential military action is reserved to Westminster, it is not something on which there should be a formal Executive position. Accordingly, although I endorse wholly the position of my party leader at Westminster, I am not prepared today to dignify the amendment with an affirmative vote.

Today, I want to concentrate on the motion that commemorates the tragedy of last year's events by focusing on the growing range of links between Scotland and the United States, and on the mutual

benefits that we firmly believe those links bring to both of our countries. The United States has always been of special importance to Scots—our links stretch back over centuries and encompass a flow of ideas and people that has helped both our countries to grow and prosper. The vibrant exchange of people, science, technology, research, commerce and the arts between our two countries continues to this day.

We remember today the tragedy that befell New York and we recall that that great city has many strong links with Scotland. It was there that many of our ancestors first set eyes on the new land of their dreams; a land that welcomed them and where many prospered. The strength and resilience that have been shown by New York city over the past year have once again shown us in Scotland, and the whole world, that we thrive best when we work together and look out and care for each other. Indeed, New York's recovery is testament to the fact that we are stronger together.

Our new Parliament and the new constitutional arrangements under devolution offer Scotland a unique opportunity not only to work harder to improve the lives of Scots at home, but to be more proactive in international links. It is because of our strong links with the United States that the Executive took the important step last year of establishing a new post of first secretary for Scottish affairs in the British embassy in Washington DC, to promote Scotland in the United States, to build links with US organisations and individuals, to advance our priority goals together, and to open up opportunities for us to learn from the wealth of talent and experience that America has to offer. In establishing the US post it was important that it be based in the British embassy, which provides us with direct access to US-wide resources and support through working closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the network of consulates throughout the United States.

The Scottish affairs office has an important role in driving forward the Executive's strategy to develop business, commercial, educational and cultural links with the United States. It has already established links with US academic, business and cultural organisations, as well as with a wide range of American-Scottish groups. It works closely with Scottish Enterprise, particularly on the globalScot initiative. It is working with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC and with Scottish Executive colleagues to implement plans to showcase Scottish culture at next year's Smithsonian Folklife Festival. That two-week festival takes place on America's back lawn, the National Mall in Washington DC, and affords an ideal opportunity to project Scottish culture.

We in Scotland are fortunate to enjoy a unique

degree of recognition in the USA. That is, of course, partly because of past emigration of our people—25 million Americans currently identify themselves as having Scottish heritage. Think of our contribution to US history. Witness the Scottish origins of many of the founding fathers. Think of the Scottish intellectuals, for example James Witherspoon at Princeton, who helped to create some of America's most prestigious universities. Think of engineering and scientific innovations that are represented by, for example, Alexander Graham Bell, and think of great industrialists and philanthropists, such as Andrew Carnegie. Those links continue today, which is only right for a country that produces one of the highest proportions of graduates of any region in Europe. To take one example, the e-bridge between the University of Edinburgh and the University of Connecticut at Stamford provides a means by which academics on both sides of the Atlantic can collaborate to push back the boundaries of research and innovation.

It is precisely because of Scotland's strengths in education and science that our strategy for engagement in the USA over the next 12 to 18 months will have science, technology and education as its major focus. We are already working with states in the United States that are recognised as centres of excellence in those areas. Massachusetts, for example, has strong Scottish links and unparalleled educational and scientific communities. Illinois also has many business and cultural links with Scotland. We will continue to pursue those links and others.

Of course, we are not forgetting that we possess in Scotland some of the most recognised national symbols of any country in the world, such as tartan, our whisky, our landscape and our golf courses, which are renowned magnets for international tourism, not least from the US. We will not ignore our traditional strengths of golf, whisky and tourism, all of which have a part to play in projecting Scotland in America, but we will also promote and celebrate the contemporary strengths of Scotland, which are the key to our future economic well-being: Scottish universities, Scottish science and technology, and Scottish financial acumen. Through working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our partner agencies, such as VisitScotland and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, the Executive is conscious of the substantial reservoir of good will that exists towards us in the US.

In the time that remains to me, I will highlight our law enforcement, educational and cultural links with America. In his winding-up speech, my colleague Iain Gray, the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning, will describe links in business, higher education and transport.

Scotland and the United States felt together at Lockerbie the devastation that is wrought by international terrorism. Because of the threats that are posed by international terrorism—threats that we saw carried out so tragically on 11 September 2001—we must join forces across international borders and be committed to increased and more effective cross-border co-operation.

At police and ministerial level we have fostered excellent links with law enforcement agencies in the United States. Scottish police forces and the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency co-operate closely with their US counterparts on operational matters. Scottish officers benefit from training opportunities that are provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other US organisations.

During his visit to New York for tartan day this spring, the First Minister received a briefing from the US Drug Enforcement Administration. As a direct follow-up to contacts that were made then, senior representatives from the United States' DEA will attend a special meeting of the Scottish drug enforcement forum at the Scottish Police College later this month to deliver a series of presentations covering emerging world drug trends and joint working arrangements in the US. The forum will enable a full and valuable exchange of views and expertise between the central players in drug enforcement here and in America. That sharing of knowledge and expertise will help Scottish law enforcement agencies to build on their own progress and successes in tackling the drugs threat.

Another good example of law enforcement links with the US was a recent conference that was hosted by the Scottish Police College for the FBI national executive institute. The institute is an important educational programme that is designed to meet the needs of the chief executive officers of the 200 largest law enforcement agencies of the United States, and their international colleagues. Since the institute's formation in 1976, more than 600 police executives have graduated from it. On this occasion, UK participants included the chief constable of Strathclyde police. Such international networks are an important means of learning from each other. It is widely recognised that organised crime is increasingly becoming a global problem, so we must have the fullest international co-operation. I am pleased that Scotland hosted that event and I warmly welcome the American involvement.

Educational links with the US are already well established throughout the country and at all levels of the system, ranging from pen-pals and school visits in primary schools, to video making and videoconferencing, to sports scholarships, student exchanges and gap years in and after



secondary school, to student teacher placements and teacher exchanges in the years to follow. This year, the British Council has arranged, through its Fulbright UK/US teacher exchange scheme, eight whole-year teacher exchanges, three more for a shorter period and two reciprocal head-teacher work shadows. In addition, two local authorities in Scotland have long-established teacher exchange links with Michigan and Chicago. Such exchanges offer an ideal opportunity for professionals to learn about the educational approaches and policies of the other country and to establish lasting friendships and working links, which benefit schools, towns, authorities and cohorts of pupils. The personal, social and professional gains are self-evident.

Special factors often underpin such links. For example, Aberdeen City Council's education department is pursuing links with all the towns in the USA that bear the name of Aberdeen, and Hamilton District Youth Theatre in Scotland has a link with the Encore Summer Theater for Youth in Hamilton, Ohio. East Lothian has the John Muir awards and is linked with Yosemite in California. Dunbar Primary School has links with Yosemite Valley School. Lockerbie Academy has links with Syracuse University in New York state that arose from the tragedy of the Lockerbie bombing, and Operation Friendship in Lockerbie is partnered with Operation Friendship in Indianapolis.

A notable success that is based on an idea from Georgia, USA has been Achievers International. That is a school based import-export programme in which schools trade products with partner schools around the globe, setting up companies and seeking sponsorship from local businesses and local enterprise companies. Some 60 Scottish schools are currently involved, linking with 20 states throughout the USA.

The eleventh of September has had an impact—we hope that it is temporary—on some of those links, yet the Scottish Executive's international education conference, which is being held on 11 September, just as it was last year, emphasises that international understanding is founded on personal links and the growth of awareness among young people and that with such links, we can help such understanding to grow and flourish from an early age. We welcome particularly at this time the strength of our educational links with the US.

I mentioned the work that we are doing on the promotion of Scottish culture with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. The annual Smithsonian folklife festival is one of the highlights of the American summer season. More than 1 million people from throughout the USA visited the festival last year. The Scottish Executive was therefore delighted to accept an invitation from the

Smithsonian Institution for Scotland to participate in the July 2003 event. That will be a unique opportunity to showcase the best in Scottish culture and to present fully the vibrant and exciting traditional culture that informs and stimulates our contemporary culture.

The strength of Scottish-American historical links and the degree of interest in the connections between Scottish and US contemporary culture and heritage were apparent at the events that were organised for the biggest and best-ever tartan day celebrations earlier this year. Our involvement in the Smithsonian festival will allow us to add to our many friends in the USA who cherish and enjoy Scotland's rich cultural traditions. We look forward to working with the Smithsonian Institution and our Scottish partners to make that a truly memorable event of which Scotland can be proud.

We stand by our American friends in remembering the dreadful events of a year ago and we admire the resilience that the United States has shown. That resilience of the human spirit was reflected today both at the Lauriston fire station, where a memorial plaque to the serving fire officers and others who gave their lives was unveiled, and at the service at St Giles cathedral. In his time for reflection address, Johnston McKay talked about that resilience of the human spirit in the poignant and personal phone calls that were made by people on the planes who knew that they were going to die.

At the end of last year, members received a set of poems by pupils from Williamwood High School in Clarkston, reflecting their reactions to the events of 11 September 2001. One of those poems, by Sean Donnachie in form 1, brings out the very human side of that day and the personal resilience that was shown.

"On the eleventh of September, 2001  
An American Airline was going to New York,  
It went off course, with passengers onboard.  
It was Terrorists  
With their knives in their hands.

They hijacked the plane  
With the innocent passengers  
Who did not know what was happening,  
But suddenly they saw they were heading for a building,  
The Terrorist said, 'you're going to die!'

We got some phones,  
To phone home  
Our loved ones, sitting on a couch.  
I am on a plane, which is not good.  
There are hijackers on my plane  
Who have knives in their hands.  
I phoned to say  
That I love you loads,  
So please tell the family,  
And all my friends."

It is the thoughts that are captured in that poem that many of us will be reflecting on in the course

of today. We take the opportunity that the debate provides to reflect, but also to look forward to deepening and broadening our ties with America over the coming months and years. It can be difficult to turn our thoughts to the future as we remember the tragic events of the recent past, but I believe that by strengthening our links with the United States we not only show solidarity with the American people, but we play our part in rebuilding international confidence and in developing a more mature relationship with that great nation.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the educational, historical, cultural and economic links between Scotland and the USA and wishes to see these developed and enhanced to the mutual benefit of both countries.

**The Presiding Officer:** I am grateful to the Deputy First Minister for taking five minutes less than his allotted time. That is an example that I hope other members will follow. I remind members that it is the screens that we go by and not the advance lists. There are names on the screen that were not on my advance list and names that were on the advance list that are not on the screen, but the screen is all that matters. I call John Swinney to speak to and move his amendment.

14:52

**Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):** This is a welcome but sombre debate. It is an opportunity to commend the historic and continuing links between Scotland and the United States, but it is also an opportunity to commemorate what has become one of the most infamous events in the history of that great country.

Twelve months ago, we met in this Parliament to express our horror and anguish at the barbaric acts inflicted on the people of the United States. Numbed by what we all saw on our television screens and by what we heard in the last desperate moments of mobile phone calls between innocent people and those shortly to be heartbroken, we tried, as friends of the American people, to offer our sympathy and support. We do so again today to reiterate the common values and bonds that we share with the people of the United States.

Those links are deeply ingrained in the history of our two countries. The impact of the clearances led to the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Scots to the United States. By 1790, there were around 250,000 Scots in America and they continued to arrive throughout the following centuries. Present estimates suggest that between 9 million and 24 million Americans claim Scots descent. Those may be ambitious or, perhaps,

exaggerated numbers, but one gets a flavour of their reality here at home. Last year, along with Duncan Hamilton, I visited the genealogy centre at Northton on the island of Harris. On a map of the United States, the curators of the centre had carefully plotted the destinations of thousands of emigrants from the Western Isles. The map is an intensely congested picture of changing lives and new hopes.

Those and other Scots emigrants have helped to shape the American way of life—a culture of optimism and innovation, with a firm and unyielding belief in the great principles of freedom, justice and democracy. Among those many Scots, there are famous people who have contributed handsomely to the rich tapestry that is now the United States. Andrew Carnegie, John Muir and Alexander Graham Bell, to name but three, have made astonishing and varied contributions to life in the United States.

However, we have contributed far more than talent and people. Scotland, and ideas that have been forged in Scotland, have helped to create the very fabric of the United States. Frances Wright—a Scot who settled in America in 1824—dedicated her life to the abolition of slavery, universal education and equal rights for women. In 1828, she delivered an independence day address in which she defined the United States as

“the palladium of human liberty—the favoured scene of human improvement.”

Thanks to the efforts of Scots Americans, there is now a new day of national celebration in the US—tartan day. I have had the privilege of attending the tartan day celebrations in Washington and New York three times. Amid the splendour of Capitol Hill and a collection of tartans assembled from around the country, one of the great themes that emerges from the Americans who participate is a deep appreciation that Scotland's political history has informed their political development. The 1320 declaration of Arbroath is commonly viewed as having inspired the American declaration of independence. John Witherspoon—to whom the Deputy First Minister referred—was born in Beith and was one of nine Scots who signed the declaration of independence. He trained the leadership of the US—one president, one vice-president, 12 state governors, 56 state legislators and 33 judges, including three Supreme Court judges. Earlier this year, George Reid reminded the Parliament that Witherspoon brought the ideas of the Scottish enlightenment to those young revolutionary minds. Such ideas were based on social cohesion and communal responsibility.

Much of the outstanding success and influence of Scots who have settled in America has been attributed to the fundamental belief in the value of

education. To this day, Americans celebrate the contribution of Scots to the education of their young men and women. Between 1726 and 1837, Presbyterians founded some 65 academies—or log colleges—in North America. The historian Tom Devine noted that in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, almost all the colonial medical profession in North America were Scots or Scots trained.

Educational links between our two countries have continued to flourish. The University of Glasgow was the first university in the UK to open an office in the heartland of silicon valley. From the enlightenment to the development of technology that was undreamt of even a few years ago, educational links between the US and Scotland have run deep. Every year, universities throughout Scotland are enriched by the contribution of students from North America, who bring with them much more than academic excellence. The advent of superbowl parties in student flats is a recent example of cross-cultural exchange.

Die-hards may shudder, but in recent years, Hampden Park and Murrayfield have not just been the national stadiums for football and rugby. The hallowed turf has also played host to American gridiron. For those who understand the game, the Scottish Claymores have been one of the leading American football teams in Europe.

There is virtually no country on earth that is untouched by US cultural influence. From “Dallas” through “Dynasty” to “Friends” and “The West Wing”, American creativity has been enjoyed by millions of Scots. That creativity, which is evident in films, television and elsewhere, is not just a testament to US talent—it is a reminder of the great entrepreneurial spirit that is so redolent of America. That spirit is fuelled by what is sometimes called the American way—the belief that, no matter how humble an individual’s background, there should be no barriers to individual achievement. Scots have flourished in that economic culture.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Scots led the way in the development of shipbuilding on the east coast of America and contributed massively to the expansion of the railways. The contemporary economic links between our two countries support many thousands of jobs. In Scotland, we are grateful that the people of America have the good sense to value the water of life. Whisky exports are worth hundreds of millions of pounds to distilleries in Scotland. However, not only the whisky industry benefits from American tastes. Last year, Scottish exports to the US were worth £1.6 billion. It is our third most important export market.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Scotland benefited from US inward investment. US investment was

vital in establishing silicon glen and global names such as IBM and Honeywell found a base in Scotland. Currently, the nature of inward investment is changing. The way forward is to capitalise on Scotland’s strengths, the education and ingenuity of our people and the academic excellence of our universities.

The traffic is by no means all one way. Scottish companies with global ambitions have sought investment opportunities in the United States. We must encourage Scottish firms to grasp such opportunities. When the Scottish North American Business Council was launched three years ago, Philip Lader, then US ambassador to the UK, said:

“We Americans have much to learn from the innovators of Scotland.”

Such remarks show the valuable reputation that we have abroad for innovation and honesty in business. We must build on that reputation to help us through difficult times.

Those historic, educational, cultural and economic links have created strong bonds between our two countries. Those are bonds that we have cherished creating and we are determined that they will endure. Those bonds have been strengthened out of tragedy and the shared sense of grief and revulsion that all of us felt one year ago. Three Scots were killed in the World Trade Center and the hearts of millions were touched. We felt helpless, but that did not prevent the people of Scotland from trying to help. A Glasgow policeman told his two children, aged nine and 11, that he was raising money for families of victims and they decided to make their own contribution. They sold their toys for £173 to boost the value of the fund.

Stories such as that one show the reality of the close friendship between our two countries, but with that close friendship comes a right and a duty to say what we think a friend needs to hear. In our personal lives we give advice to friends that they may not want to hear, but which we think they need to hear. So too, in our national life, we offer advice to our friends that we believe they should hear. In that spirit, we offer these views.

The day after 11 September, the French newspaper *Le Monde* published a front-page banner headline, which read, “We are all Americans”. That captured the shared sense of outrage of people throughout the world. In Europe, Asia and Africa, among people of every continent and every country, there was disgust at this appalling crime against humanity. Those who organised and took part in the atrocities last year showed contempt for human life. They showed contempt for the democratic process—the rock on which this and other Parliaments are based.

There should be no hiding place for terrorists

who wreak such destruction on the lives of innocent people. There can be no justification for that inhuman conduct. All of us who enjoy democracy must be totally intolerant of those who seek to destroy it. Terrorists must be hunted down and dealt with. Our democracy, which is so strong yet—as we saw—so fragile, must be protected by those who enjoy it. Those who challenge it must be dealt with severely, on the basis of evidence and in accordance with international law.

Those foundations—of evidence and of the supremacy of international law—are based on values of democracy and justice. They should be reinforced by collaborative action across the globe. Those values of democracy and justice must be to the fore as we address all the great issues of uncertainty in the world. As we remember the suffering of many people as a result of the atrocities last year, we must reflect on the values of democracy and justice as we confront the new uncertainties.

That is why we in the Scottish National Party, and many others throughout the world, argue that a fresh, specific United Nations mandate is required before any military offensive is launched against Iraq. Action can be morally justified, as it was in the Gulf war, only when a new UN Security Council resolution is debated and approved. The SNP supported a Security Council resolution at the time of the last Gulf war.

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP):** I invite the member to clarify whether the SNP seeks a UN General Assembly debate involving the member countries of the UN or a debate involving the five Security Council members?

**Mr Swinney:** It is essential that we have a Security Council resolution of equal weight to that which we had at the time of the last Gulf war. That is an essential prerequisite of any intervention.

That Security Council resolution can be justified only when incontrovertible evidence is brought forward to prove the threat posed by Iraq and the case for action. When the secretary-general of the Arab league says, as he did earlier this month, that

“a military confrontation would open the gates of Hell in the Middle East”,

we must all sit up and take notice. There is a dangerous and unstable situation in the middle east and we must work to resolve that conflict.

We cannot brush aside the concerns of the rest of the international community. Those concerns are legitimate and they must be addressed. There are concerns about the evidence for, the aims of and the consequences for peace and stability of a military offensive. There are also concerns that a military offensive will claim the lives of yet more

innocent civilians. It is a tragic fact that the poorest people in the world usually pay the highest price when military action is unleashed.

Those of us who express misgivings about unilateral military strikes have no illusions about the current regime in Baghdad, which is barbaric. Saddam Hussein has been responsible for the deaths of thousands of Kurds and many others who oppose his will. However, action against Saddam—if it has to be military action—must be undertaken only in accordance with international law. A large majority of people in Scotland appear to be opposed to a military offensive. It is right that the Parliament, which is our democratic national forum, should help to inform those views. Debate is the lifeblood of our democracy and the debate over a military offensive should be heard.

The motion celebrates the links between this country and the United States. It is a recognition of the growing interdependence of our two nations. I look forward to the development of that close relationship. We will not always agree on individual issues, but we are as one on the overriding values that determine our way of life. The values that bind us are freedom, democracy and justice. We have a shared sense of anger at people who challenge those values and a determination to ensure that those values triumph in this uncertain world.

Scotland and the United States are linked by the origins of political thinking; by the patterns of emigration and immigration; by the shared set of values of cherishing freedom, democracy and justice; and by shared experiences in educational, economic and cultural development. We are right to pay tribute to those links, right to remember those who have suffered since September 11 last year and right to express our firm views on the uncertainties that lie ahead.

I move amendment S1M-3368.1, to leave out from “notes” to end and insert:

“recognises the dignity and courage shown by the people of the United States of America in the aftermath of 11 September 2001; notes the educational, historical, cultural and economic links between Scotland and the USA and wishes to see these developed and enhanced to the mutual benefit of both countries, and, in the spirit of those links, urges the US administration to publish incontrovertible evidence to justify any offensive military action against Iraq and obtain a fresh United Nations mandate before embarking on any such initiative.”

15:07

**Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con):** The debate is timely and fitting. It enables us to reflect on our special relationship with America, which is bound by links that have been close and enduring since Scots left these shores to carve a new life in that new country. When the

appalling events of 11 September last year unfolded, and that savage barbarism was visited on innocent people, we felt with particular keenness the outrage, horror, bewilderment and dismay that was experienced all over the world.

Those of us who were at St Giles cathedral earlier today drew comfort from the service and from the presence of Scots, Americans and people from the rest of the United Kingdom and abroad. We joined together in a sense of human union to share our reflections and to look ahead. Members certainly drew comfort from Johnston McKay's words in the chamber earlier. That is why it is timely and fitting that we should remember those black and horrific events in the Parliament today. It is also timely and fitting that we in Scotland should reassure our friends that, as we reflect on our memory, we also reflect on our friendship with America and look to the future, mindful of the positive virtues and attributes of our friendship.

September 11 of last year is a date that is marked indelibly in the annals of history. It is unique for the most horrendous reasons, but it is also a catalyst for going forward positively. That is why I say with regret that the amendment to the Executive motion that has been lodged by the Scottish National Party seems to me to be in poor taste. The amendment is inappropriate to the debate and to the Parliament. The motion was an opportunity for the Parliament to demonstrate unanimity of sentiment and support for an old friend. It is unfortunate that the SNP has chosen to diminish that opportunity. If the SNP insisted on raising matters outwith the motion, it would have been sensitive for it to do so in its own debating time tomorrow, without intruding on this debate. It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Conservatives, to speak to and to support the motion.

I remember my first encounter with Americans. When I was a little girl, my father brought home two American sailors—naval officers, I presume—from the Polaris base on the Clyde. It was interesting for two reasons. First, my father was not in the habit of bringing home sailors. Secondly, when the two officers removed their naval caps, they revealed to my astonishment that their hair was cut short across the tops of their heads—to accommodate their caps, as I thought. Without realising that it was a crew cut, I assumed that America must be a very cold place where everybody had to have their hair shaved off to accommodate appropriate headgear. I also remember their geniality and warmth, which was obvious even to a small child. That is a hallmark of Americans. Certainly, the physical presence of Americans in Scotland—perhaps most notably during the second world war and at the naval base on the Clyde—has been a tangible demonstration of the empathy that exists between our two countries.

That empathy is not surprising, however, given the strong Scottish influence that there has been on America. James Wilson, who was born in St Andrews and settled in Philadelphia, and Dr John Witherspoon, of whom mention has been made and who was also born in Scotland, were signatories of the declaration of independence. A further seven signatories were directly or indirectly descended from Scots. That got the States off to a good start. Another Scot, Alexander Hamilton, proposed the American national banking system and is now depicted on the American \$10 bill. Thirty-five United States Supreme Court justices have been Scots, and numerous locations in America have been nostalgically named after places that Scottish immigrants left behind. There are eight Aberdeens, seven Glasgows and—here is a statistic to conjure with—eight Edinburghs. No fewer than 11 United States Presidents have been of Scots ancestry and one of them—Woodrow Wilson—said:

“Every line of strength in American history is a line coloured with Scottish blood.”

Small wonder that, with that pedigree and those influences, there is a special historical and genealogical bond between our two countries.

That enduring closeness continues in a physical form today. I am delighted that Liane Dorsey, from the United States consulate general, is with us today. She has taken an enthusiastic interest in the Parliament since 1999—an interest that has been obvious to all members—and her presence here is very welcome. Another prominent American in Scotland, who is also a lady—I still distinguish ladies from women—is Susan Rice, the chief executive of Lloyds TSB Scotland. She is prominent in Scottish public life and has taken a keen interest in Scottish affairs. We are pleased that, after Alexander Hamilton explained banking to America, the United States has been able to send Susan Rice back over here to check that we are still on top of the game.

Besides those historical, cultural and personal links between our countries, there are some important business aspects. Figures for 2000-01 show that approximately 12 per cent of Scotland's exports go to the United States at a value of around £2.5 billion a year. Visitors from the USA represent the largest source of overseas tourism in Scotland, accounting for £189 million—24 per cent—of expenditure by foreign tourists in this country. There are also roughly 287 American companies in Scotland. Naturally, the events of last year influenced the confidence of Americans in air travel, and that has been visible in Scotland. We hope that renewed confidence will emerge, so that we can welcome more Americans to our country.

As those business links indicate, there is mutual opportunity to be developed. America has a

remarkable entrepreneurial aptitude and a willingness to tackle things. Theodore Roosevelt said:

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

Scots adopt the same practical approach. Recently, Susan Rice said to me:

“There is a similarity of mindset. People in the US are brought up to believe that anyone can achieve anything they want. Common man makes good. In Scotland, people eschew airs and graces and make a place for anyone who has merit.”

I agree with her. However, I think that the Scots would concede that we seem to lack the confidence that is so obvious in the enterprise of America, where there are examples for us to follow.

We should look at that unashamed, unabashed entrepreneurial attitude and emulate it over here. We should borrow from that confident, irrepressible energy. We should admire a political climate that nurtures and facilitates enterprise and does not seek to obstruct it. We should copy a model that says that business breeds business.

I am told that at the BIO 2002 conference in Toronto earlier this year, Lord Sainsbury, on behalf of the United Kingdom, indicated that research spending in the UK would increase by 5 to 7 per cent per annum. A delegate from the audience intimated that the National Institutes of Health in the USA would increase research funding by 10 to 15 per cent per annum and double the budget in five years.

What is our vision? What about our transport links? What about our physical connections with America? There must be improved transatlantic air travel. If we are to develop the marvellous opportunities that exist for both countries, we must find a way of physically manifesting them to enable that mobility of travel for holiday and business purposes.

The Parliament has certainly facilitated contact with the United States and tartan day is an obvious example of that. It has also led to parliamentary visits with reference to trade, research and development potential. Indeed, the Deputy First Minister referred to the Scottish affairs office. We applaud those initiatives, which are fruitful and worth while. We would like to see those links improved. The Parliament needs to direct its attention to how best that should be taken forward.

As America looks upward and forward after 11 September of last year, Scotland looks upward and forward with her. In our respective domestic affairs, there is a special niche for our two countries and we look forward to that partnership going from strength to strength.

**The Presiding Officer:** Again, I am grateful to Miss Goldie for taking less than her allotted time.

15:17

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Today our thoughts are with those who lost loved ones a year ago. We can all remember where we were when events unfolded last year. I remember leaving the Rural Development Committee and seeing staff, security guards and MSPs crowded round, watching news broadcasts on the television. However, it was not until I returned to my office that I realised what was happening.

Like many people in Scotland, my first thoughts were for my friends in the New York area. Many were also worried about family. I am sure that that happened throughout the world. The events of 11 September mean that all nationalities mourn loved ones today.

Out of the horror of those events have come accounts of heroism and humanity, of people who risked and gave their lives to save others. Communities, office workers, fire officers and many others who were faced with the devastation have pulled together to ensure that good comes from the atrocities. We have seen the effects of tragedies in our country. In Dunblane, communities pulled together to bring good out of what happened there. Therefore, it is right that we should spend time today looking at our past, present and future links with America.

My constituency, the Highlands and Islands, has many ties with the United States, not the least of which are family ties that were formed from the Highland clearances, when many people were forced off their land and sought refuge in the United States, among other places.

When last I visited my friends in New York, I took the opportunity to visit Ellis Island, the immigration point through which most highlanders fleeing to America passed. I was impressed at the way in which the museum there is constructed and shows the experience of the immigrants. Many of the exhibits were provided by those who made their way through Ellis Island or by their families, and their stories were often told by themselves or by someone close to them.

The main hall where people congregated has been left empty, to allow each visitor to imagine the scene at different times in its history. Despite the large number of visitors, it was possible to feel alone there, imagining the experience of the people who had passed through. It was a bit like being in an old cathedral, feeling the history and the past generations.

An exhibition has also taken place at Ellis Island that shows the extent of immigration from the

Highlands and Islands. We should never forget that when Scottish landowners displaced our people, America accepted them. It would be romanticising events to say that they were accepted with open arms. That was not always the case, and from my time visiting Ellis Island I became aware of the tragedy that some of them faced, with families being split up or not being able to make the journey. That is detailed by the people who were affected.

We in Scotland have close links to America through our shared heritage. Those who went to America became Americans but have always retained their links to Scotland and their Scottish heritage. Millions of Americans claim to have Scottish roots. The growth of the internet allows those people to have direct access to documents relating to their family history. That enables them to forge links with the places that their families came from. They are able to visit places that their ancestors left and make contact with family members who are still in Scotland.

In Scotland, there are plans to construct a hilltop memorial to victims of the clearances in Helmsdale and to develop a research centre. I hope that VisitScotland will be mindful of that project in its marketing campaigns. They should also be mindful of directing visitors to Croick church, where those cleared off the land etched their messages on the church windows as they sheltered outside.

However, not only the Highlands have links to America. Such links are found across Scotland and I am sure that members will take the opportunity today to outline their local links.

As Annabel Goldie said, there are many places in America that are named after Scottish cities. Time after time, the names Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow appear. Our cities were built around trade and much of that was with America, resulting in the forging of historical links.

The focus on genealogy is significant and will hopefully encourage Scots Americans to come over and investigate their family history and see Scotland as it is today: a modern, dynamic country.

Much of the tourism industry in Scotland is dependent on American visitors, who contribute \$200 million to the Scottish economy. The industry suffered difficulties last year because people stayed away following the events of 11 September and the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. It is important that we encourage them back. We have a lot to offer American tourists. Apart from our heritage and beautiful scenery, we have world-class golf courses, such as St Andrews—indeed, the Americans say that the hole number 1 at Machrihanish is the best hole number 1 in the

world. We also have the Edinburgh festival, which draws visitors from all over the world.

In other sectors too, the ties with America are important. Oil companies that are based in the States have provided and continue to provide jobs in the North sea. Those jobs are important to people throughout Scotland and are especially important to the city of Aberdeen, where many companies have set up UK headquarters.

In Inverness, an American-owned company, Inverness Medical, provides more than 1,000 jobs—one of the largest private companies in the area. It works with local health agencies to provide much-needed research and development in diabetes.

That is not the only health-related link that we have with the USA; there are many more, such as the £100,000 fellowship to study cancer services in both countries. That joint working will identify new ideas and methods of care which will benefit both countries. We must do all that we can to strengthen such economic ties, encourage more companies to set up bases in Scotland and also learn from their experience.

The American people are proud of their Scottish roots and have established tartan day to celebrate them. In this Parliament, we have supported those events by having debates and sending delegations. It is a wonderful sight to see thousands of pipers marching and playing in the streets of New York. Tartan day provides an important focus on Scotland, giving us a stage not only for our culture, but for our industry. The USA is one of our biggest export markets and we need to ensure that it grows.

We can learn much from the people of New York about how we can live side by side with people of different cultures and religions. The city's population is so diverse that visitors from any country feel at home. We can learn much from their acceptance of immigrants, and our football supporters could learn a lot from the Rangers supporter and the Celtic supporter whom I saw in a Brooklyn bar, dressed in their team colours but sitting together enjoying a drink.

Some members have used the debate to express concerns about the situation regarding Iraq. I wish that they had taken the same action as the Trades Union Congress and used another debate on another day to raise those concerns. They might want to reflect on whether their position today has been appropriate.

**Tommy Sheridan:** Will Rhoda Grant give way?

**Rhoda Grant:** I am just closing.

However, I am sure that those members will agree that their concerns about Iraq in no way reflect a lack of feeling for those whose lives were

torn apart by the events last year. Today, our thoughts are with them.

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank all the main speakers, because we have gained a little bit of time. However, there are still more members on the list than can possibly be called to speak, so I will have to impose a strict four-minute time limit.

15:25

**Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP):** All of us, I am sure, can remember where we were when we first heard the news of the attack on the twin towers. I was with Karen Gillon, Cathy Peattie, Irene McGugan, Brian Monteith and Ian Jenkins at an Education, Culture and Sport Committee event in New Lanark. Cathy Peattie received a call on her mobile from her daughter outside our hotel and we all rushed in to watch the television.

New Lanark was an appropriate place—if any place can be called that—to start to reflect on a different world. In contrast to what we saw that day, New Lanark is founded on vision and hope. It was there that Robert Owen, in his new year's day address to the inhabitants, in 1816, wrote:

"I know that society may be formed so as to exist without crime, without poverty, with health greatly improved, with little, if any misery, and with intelligence and happiness increased a hundredfold; and no obstacle whatsoever intervenes at this moment except ignorance to prevent such a state of society from becoming universal".

Robert Owen tried to put into practice those utopian ideals and that utopian vision in New Lanark, but we should also recall that he tried to build a utopian community in America at New Harmony. The state in which New Harmony is situated is built on a utopian ideal. Indeed, all the states of the United States of America are built on a utopian ideal.

The tragedy of 11 September showed us how far we are from utopia. To be far from utopia means feeling the pain and hurt of being a human being. We felt—and we still feel—the pain and hurt of the entire American people. Every member has friends in the United States. All of us spoke to them by phone or e-mailed them in the hours and days after the events. We are duty-bound as friends as well as human beings to help them to recover their fine attributes—innocence, outgoing confidence, generosity, freedom of spirit. That is the purpose of showing solidarity in the Parliament today.

We are also duty-bound to think of other friends. My mother, who is dead now, left Edinburgh in 1948 to teach in Iraq. That was quite an adventure for a 27-year-old woman. When she was in Mosul, she needed to get her passport renewed. She went to the British consulate and met a 28-year-

old man from Troon, who was working as a consul following war service in Egypt and time as a Reuters correspondent, when he had learnt Arabic. That man was my father. I am the product of a passport renewal.

I was brought up in Scotland hearing and knowing much about the poor, suffering people of Iraq, who labour under oppression and violence by a leader who seized and has held on to power with unimagined brutality. Just as we as human beings want to heal the pain of our many friends in America, we want also to heal the pain of the Iraqi people. We should not be afraid of saying in the Parliament of all places that we want to create a utopia for them and for us, even if it is the hardest of tasks. We can do so only by underpinning that with the rule of law—Robert Owen knew that. We can do so only if we all accept that we cannot run off as individuals or individual states to follow individual causes or avenge individual or collective loss. We must work together. That means working together through the United Nations.

We cannot do any of what I have suggested except by considered and co-operative action with all nations, taken for overwhelming reasons of the greatest good. That is what a utopia is. Those conditions are not yet in place. I believe—as do many in the Parliament—that their lack makes the present stance of the United Kingdom Government and the Government of the USA untenable. It is right that the Parliament can say so in friendship with the American people.

15:30

**Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab):** It is absolutely right that the Parliament should seek to commemorate the terrible events of 11 September and those who died on that day in New York. It is also right to commemorate those who survived and the grieving families who have been left behind in New York, Scotland and elsewhere. In a wonderful piece in *The Guardian* today, the historian, Simon Schama, describes in terms that would break the hardest of hearts the bereaved British families who attended a church in New York less than two weeks after 11 September. In my constituency, there is a grieving family who lost their son on 11 September in New York. It would be wrong for anyone in the Parliament to argue that the hearts of every member do not go out to the people of America and to those who suffered on that terrible day.

It is right that we should take this opportunity to condemn those who were responsible for those events—those who supported, assisted or bankrolled the hijackers in any way were evil men. It is right that we restate again and again that no cause and no ideal, whether religious or political, can ever justify the evil acts that were perpetrated against the American people on that day.



Equally, we must remember that those who died on 11 September believed that they were living in a democracy. Those who survived them still hold that faith in democracy. In democracies, the right to freedom of speech and to unfettered debate in representative institutions is sacrosanct, particularly during the difficult times, when democracies are under attack and on difficult days such as today.

I do not accept the arguments of those who say that, on a day such as today, it is somehow indecent or in poor taste, or shows a lack of respect, to debate what the consequences, the implications and the lessons of 11 September might be. The entire world is debating those issues. To limit in any way open and democratic debate in the Parliament is to hand the perpetrators of the attacks on 11 September a very small victory, which they do not deserve and which we should not give them. I am encouraged that the SNP's amendment has allowed us to have a debate about Iraq on a day such as today, although I cannot support it, because it sanctions a war against Iraq in circumstances that I cannot support.

When I listened to the radio this morning, I heard a New Yorker describe the atmosphere in New York today as quiet, subdued and personal, but also watchful of those American politicians who might seek to use today to exploit that atmosphere for their own purposes. The New Yorker said that, in his view, many people in New York did not want what happened to them to be used as an excuse to perpetrate on third world countries outrages on an even larger scale that would murder even more innocent men, women and children. We have seen that happen already in Afghanistan and it may well happen in Iraq if Parliaments such as the Scottish Parliament do not come out to express their views forcefully. That is why it is right that we debate what might happen to Iraq in the weeks and months ahead.

In Iraq, we find exactly the same sort of working men, women and children as would have been found in New York on that terrible day. It will do nothing to console those who lost their loved ones or to honour the memory of those who gave their lives if those Iraqis are killed in a devastating war that only the likes of the United States can launch against a third world country. We do not have television pictures of the suffering in Afghanistan and we would not get television pictures of the suffering in Iraq, but that does not make it any more justifiable to perpetrate against innocent men, women and children in those countries what those evil perpetrators did to the Americans on 11 September.

Presiding Officer, you were right to say that there was not much difference between my

amendment and the amendment that you selected, but I heard my amendment described on the BBC as a more hardline amendment. My amendment is more anti-war and more pro-peace than the SNP's amendment. If those who argue for peace and against war are described as hardliners and those who argue for war are described as the moderate and rational voice of Scotland, we live in dangerous times. George Orwell's "1984" is alive and living in Scotland in 2002.

15:34

**Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I am pleased to contribute to the debate in support of motion S1M-3368, in the name of the Deputy First Minister.

I must correct Mike Russell, because I was not in New Lanark that day. I was at home, preparing to go to the United States to attend a sporting fixture. The visit had been arranged by my American intern, David Gerritz. He had returned to America and had swung an invite for me. Naturally, I never made the trip. Flights were cancelled and those flights that were leaving had to be taken by those who had to return to their loved ones.

I have many friends in America and have visited the country many times. I was particularly keen to speak in the debate. Although I am eager to support the motion, I find it regrettable, to say the least, that the Scottish National Party has lodged its amendment. I find it regrettable not because I fear the debate about Iraq—I would be willing to take part in such a debate—but because there was no need to have it today. There was ample time to debate it tomorrow morning. We could have spent two to three hours debating the issue, which would have given all members an opportunity.

**Tommy Sheridan:** A number of members have spoken about the appropriate time for holding such a debate. They have referred to the possibility of the SNP using its time tomorrow for that debate. At what time would the member recommend that I, Dennis Canavan, Robin Harper and the other signatories to amendment S1M-3368.2, in the name of John McAllion, should have such a debate?

**Mr Monteith:** Mr Sheridan will have noticed that although I criticised the SNP's amendment, I did not refer to John McAllion's amendment. That was quite intentional. The SNP is able to lodge a motion for debate and to have it debated. I am aware of why Mr Sheridan is not able to do that and I respect his position. Today I lost respect for the leader of the SNP, because it was in his gift to give us the debate in question tomorrow, if the Executive did not. That is all that I will say on the

issue, because I want to contribute to the present debate.

The world is lucky to contain a nation that is called the United States. It is lucky because the United States is a place where human dreams can be realised. Its founding fathers wanted to do two things. They proclaimed publicly that their aim was to restore Anglo-Saxon liberties, which, they believed, were being removed not only in the United States, which was a colony at that time, but in Britain. A second aim—putting into practice the ideals of the Scottish enlightenment—is spoken of less often.

The American republic was built largely on the principles of people such as Adam Smith, who believed in individual self-interest governed by common sense and a limited need for government. The American republic was built by people such as Thomas Jefferson, the author of the declaration of independence, who was educated by a Scottish tutor who, he said,

“fixed the destinies of my life”.

James Madison, the author of the American constitution, was a student of the philosopher David Hume. The Scottish enlightenment led to the United States that we know and which many of us love. John Witherspoon and James Wilson are names of others who make it no idle boast to claim modern America as the finest ultimate practical expression of our enlightenment.

The First Minister has said that we must encourage more people to stay and work in Scotland, to build our economy, our culture and our social justice system at home. If there is one thing that we could do to achieve that, it is to bring enlightenment and freedom under the law to Scotland, to express those liberties and to join with the American people. In that way, we will be able to take on terrorism.

15:39

**Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP):** The Executive motion speaks of the links between Scotland and the United States. There is absolutely no doubt that those links are long and strong. Most members know that my links with America are very strong indeed.

It has been mentioned that the US declaration of independence was modelled on our declaration of Arbroath and there has been much reference to those famous Scots who contributed so much to the success of the United States. I never tire of telling my husband that his employer of 35 years, the United States Navy, was founded by a Scot, John Paul Jones. Annabel Goldie may have to concede that I have probably met more American sailors than she has.

However, the links between Scotland and the United States should not just be about the Scots who became famous. They should be about all the ordinary people who, over the centuries, have gone to make their home in the States but have never forgotten their Scots roots. We hear that more than 20 million people in America now claim Scots descent.

The atrocity of 11 September brought home to me, like many other Scots, just how close our links with the United States are. As we watched the horror unfold, few in the chamber will not have picked up a phone to call a friend or relative in the States. Many members were inundated with e-mails from the States in the weeks following 11 September.

In the year since then, I have been in America twice. Although I also met politicians, I spent most of my time living among ordinary Americans. I fully understand the feelings of the American people and the fact that they are shocked and angry and feel very vulnerable. After all, the attack of 11 September was the first enemy attack on US soil in modern times, so of course our American friends want retribution. On my most recent visit, the disappointment that bin Laden was apparently still at large was palpable.

However, as friends, we must caution our allies not simply to seek revenge for revenge's sake. With all the talk of war, in the past few months my thoughts have been of another war in which America got involved more than 30 years ago. The aim of that war in Vietnam was also regime change. That war was also undertaken with the support of a Labour Prime Minister in the United Kingdom.

At the time, I was living in America and worked in Dover Air Force base in Delaware. I will never forget how I regularly had to walk through a hangar that was lined with metal shipping coffins. Some weeks, more than 300 coffins landed at Dover from Vietnam. That is the reality of what Tony Blair calls paying a blood price.

In the scramble that was the fall of Saigon, the reality came home to us all. Ultimately, only the indigenous people of a country can effect regime change. There was no exit policy then; where is the exit policy now? We must warn our friends in the US of the dangers of having to do something or anything to avenge the atrocity of 11 September.

Today, the Scottish Parliament remembers the dreadful loss of life on this day last year and celebrates our ties with America. Most of all, we extend the hand of friendship and say in our Scottish way: “For the sake of democracy and world peace, America, today we feel your pain, but please ca’ canny.”

15:43

**Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):**

Like Kay Ullrich, having married an American, I too have more than a passing interest in US-Scottish relations. One year on from the events of 11 September, we face the constant reminders of the scale of that human tragedy.

Watching the television footage at the time and the reruns over the past few weeks, we have all been struck by just how absolutely unbelievable the events of that day were. The pictures still seem unreal. For me, it was like watching some kind of disaster movie, because I could not believe that it was happening.

Members have spoken about where they were and what their feelings were at the time. I had just left the European Committee. My thoughts went immediately to the young 13-year-old American girl who was living with my family while her parents, who were both doctors, looked after the sick and dying in Malawi. I was aware that her uncle was an airline pilot with United Airlines. We had a considerably tense time while we waited for news of her family in the United States.

I was proud of the support that she received from the local community. While I was in Edinburgh, the school that had adopted her—and she had been there only a few days—rallied round her. The way in which the school community pulled together reflected the way in which we saw our friendship with the United States. We tried, in the hours after the disaster, to pull together with our friends in America.

I would like to spend a few moments reflecting on the ties between my community and the United States. Two weeks ago, I was at a service in Stevenston where a plaque was unveiled to the memory of police officer Walter Weaver by his father Bill Weaver. Walter emigrated to New York some years ago and was killed in active service with the New York police department in the rescue operation when the twin towers collapsed. I had never met Walter, but I was aware that, on that day, his father was filled with pride—a pride that touched everyone in the community. His memorial will serve as a reminder of one of our own who gave his life in the service of others.

Walter's plaque also reminds us of the close ties that endure between our communities in the United States and Scotland. Annabel Goldie mentioned the annual tartan day celebrations that allow the Scots diaspora in America to remember their roots in Scotland. They also provide an opportunity to promote the friendship that endures between our nations. I was proud that the tartan day celebrations were led this year by the Kilwinning town cryer, John Smith.

I want to reflect on another link between my

community in Cunninghame South and the United States. On Friday evening, I was privileged to host a visit to my constituency by Liane Dorsey, the US consular officer, and her husband, Greg. They joined the local community to celebrate the life and work of the local poet, Robert Service, at the annual Robert Service dinner. Not only did they attend the evening, but we were privileged to hear Greg's rendition of Service's wonderful poem, "The Spell of the Yukon". I was surprised and delighted to hear from Greg that he had been taught the works of Service in his primary school in Seattle. I can assure him that we will be calling on him again next year. That is an excellent example of the links between communities in Ayrshire and the United States.

I will mention briefly an anonymous bequest that was made for a memorial in Eglinton park in Kilwinning to reflect the events of 11 September. That is another example of the ways in which our communities are working together.

I hope that the Parliament will join me today in extending the hand of friendship to the American people, and expressing to them the fact that we share their grief. Much has united us in the past. As well as our shared heritage, we share common values, a commitment to democracy, a desire for equality and tolerance, and a hope across the peoples of our communities for peace. In those shared principles and values lie our greatest strengths.

I support the motion.

15:48

**Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP):** I regret that some of the things that have been said about the amendment have been said. Jim Wallace was quite wrong to imply that, because the chamber does not have responsibility for military matters, we have no responsibility at all for humanity and for the ties of friendship across the world.

Brian Monteith said that the SNP should have given part of its day tomorrow for the debate and that a demarcation line should have been drawn between discussion of the past and discussion of the future. In their homes, our fellow Scots who sent us here will not observe such demarcation lines. They will discuss the past year and they will discuss the coming year. That will in no way diminish the solidarity and sympathy that they have with the American people today. It is impossible to discuss what has happened over the past year without looking at the choices that are available to the United Kingdom and the United States in the coming year. There is a special relationship.

**Mr Monteith:** Would the member accept that,

were we to have the debate only on the events of what is known as 9/11 today, with a debate on future foreign policy tomorrow, we could at least have achieved unanimity today and had the dispute tomorrow?

**Ms MacDonald:** I am sorry, I do not want to reiterate my point about the demarcation lines—the topic is indivisible. What happened over the past year will condition what happens over the next year. The holistic nature of the debate and its varied speeches represent Scotland and what we want our friends in America to know of our thoughts and feelings towards them.

As I said, we have a special relationship. Sometimes at the level of Government, that relationship is a little less special than it might be. However, as we have heard, there is a continuing relationship at the level of communities. The ties of history, language and modern culture—let us hear it for Dolly Parton—are unbreakable. The function of good old friends is, in sensitive situations, to be able to say the things that others may not. Old friends can hold up the mirror that we might, as Burns said,

“see ourselves as others see us!”

How will the action of the United Kingdom Government and the United States Government be seen by our other friends throughout the world? Of course Americans are our friends, but we also have friends in the middle east, the far east, in Muslim countries and in the southern hemisphere. Those friends do not necessarily agree with the terms that, so far, have been set down by White House spokesmen regarding the action of the United States and the United Kingdom against Iraq.

We must consider how the opinions expressed by Donald Rumsfeld and others will be interpreted elsewhere in the world, where we have friends who are just as valuable. Will those friends understand, for example, that a justification for attacking Iraq—breaching Iraq’s sovereignty—inside its borders is that that country has ignored United Nations resolutions? What about Israel? Israel has refused to observe United Nations resolutions, but no one talks of attacking Israel. “Ah,” the apologists say, “Israel is a democracy, but Iraq is a dictatorship.” What about Pakistan? Pakistan is not a democracy. Pakistan has nuclear weapons under the control of a military dictator, but no one would advocate attacking Pakistan. Our friends elsewhere in the world will be concerned that more devastation might be visited on innocent Iraqi men, women and children.

Unfortunately, I cannot support the SNP amendment, because it seeks to find some justification. Like John McAllion, I cannot agree with that. However, I may have misheard John

Swinney. Perhaps the SNP can clarify whether the mandate in the amendment refers to a resolution of the whole General Assembly of the United Nations or just the Security Council. That may appear to be nit-picking, but it is not if we bear in mind the views of our other friends throughout the globe.

15:53

**Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** As we have heard in the debate, there are tremendously strong links between Scotland and the United States of America. Many of us have family links. Members of my extended family went out to California, settled there and took American citizenship.

We are friends of America. As good friends, we should be candid about our relationship. I agree with Brian Monteith—I do not often agree with him—that it would have been preferable to have had a debate on the substance of the SNP amendment tomorrow, rather than today, because today should have been about commemoration. However, we are where we are and I want to make several points about the talk of war.

One year on from those dreadful events, there is much talk of war—war against the tyrant Saddam Hussein. After 11 September, the allies went to war against al-Qa’ida and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Now there is talk of war to achieve a regime change in Baghdad. We have a duty to articulate the concerns and fears of our constituents and to advise the powers that be. War cannot be anything other than an action of last resort. We cannot continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to use the methods of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Clausewitz said that war is simply the achievement of foreign policy by other means. Talk of war to achieve a change in regime sounds Clausewitzian to me.

If we want to combat terrorism, we need to strike not only at the terrorists but at the causes of terrorism. Whether we understand it or not, terrorism is the result of despair and a feeling of hopelessness. The root of the problem of terrorism emanating from the middle east is the complete failure to tackle the Arab-Israeli problem. Terrorism will never be defeated until the cause or causes of the problem are resolved. A just settlement in the middle east is necessary before the current level of terrorism can be effectively eradicated.

War must be a last resort. Our friends in the United States of America and we in the United Kingdom must remain within the parameters of well-established international law or, far from solving the problem, we will simply exacerbate it. If we go to war and our troops are deployed on our

behalf, I for one will support them in their efforts, but, for heaven's sake, that must be a last resort.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next four-minute slot will be shared by Tommy Sheridan and Dennis Canavan. I am grateful to them both for their co-operation. In a situation where I cannot call members of all the other parties, I could not call them both separately. They have two minutes each.

15:56

**Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West):** It is right and fitting that today we should remember the victims of the terrorist atrocities of a year ago and express our condolences to our bereaved friends in the United States. It is also right and fitting that we should acknowledge the close links that exist between Scotland and the United States of America.

We hear a lot about our special relationship with the United States—a relationship that is supposed to be based on friendship. I always thought that a real friend is not the puppet or the sycophant but the one who has the honesty and guts to tell us when we are wrong.

That is why we must tell the United States Government that its foreign policy is fundamentally flawed, particularly in the middle east. Of course, we must condemn the monster Saddam Hussein and his evil, despotic regime. However, I fear that an invasion of Iraq by American and British forces would make things worse instead of better and would do incalculable damage to the cause of peace in the middle east. Many thousands of lives would be at risk.

When Tony Blair speaks of a blood price to be paid, whose blood is he talking about? It is not the blood of politicians sitting in the relative safety of Whitehall or the White House. It is the blood of other people, including many British and American men and women in the armed forces and many Iraqi men, women and children who are the innocent victims of Saddam Hussein's regime.

The invasion of Iraq would cause a bloodbath throughout the entire Arab world. That is why Arab leaders are lining up to condemn the invasion, as are our European allies. Within the United Nations, America and Britain stand alone, yet George Bush and Tony Blair seem to be hellbent on invading Iraq even without the approval of the United Nations.

I was hoping that today our Scottish Parliament would have the opportunity of sending out a clear, unequivocal anti-war message. The non-selection of John McAllion's amendment has deprived us of that opportunity. I hope that the Parliament will get another opportunity soon to send out a strong

message on behalf of the people of Scotland, telling the Prime Minister and President Bush to think again and to step up diplomatic rather than military action in the quest for genuine and lasting peace in the middle east and throughout the world.

15:59

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP):** I endorse everything that Dennis Canavan said. It is right and fitting that we should commemorate the horrible events of 11 September—not just the horror, but the heroism, especially that of the firefighters who rushed into the burning towers when everyone else was rushing out. I hope that we will all remember that heroism when the green goddesses are sent in against our own firefighters soon.

Can we really talk about 11 September without talking about what happened next? Was the response to 11 September right or wrong? Was it right to launch a war on terror that ended up killing more innocent men and women than even the atrocities of New York, Pennsylvania and Washington DC did? So far, 3,620 Afghan civilians have been buried under the rubble of their homes, but not Osama bin Laden. Similarly, if the war proceeds, the burning bodies that will be dragged out of homes in Baghdad will not be those of Saddam Hussein or his associates because, like Osama bin Laden, they will be embedded deep in bunkers escaping the horror.

The war is not a just war. It does not in any way, shape or form represent a fitting tribute to the innocent victims of 11 September. If only an ounce of the energy and resources that are being deployed to prepare for war in Iraq were instead deployed in making peace and waging war on poverty and inequality throughout our world, we could build a long-lasting tribute to the victims of 11 September—a world of peace and harmony.

The other day, Noam Chomsky made the point that the way to wage war on terror is first to drain the swamp to get rid of the mosquitoes. Until we drain the swamp, we will not get rid of the mosquitoes. It is right and proper that this Parliament should say, "We are not for this unjust war."

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank Dennis Canavan and Tommy Sheridan for their co-operation.

16:02

**Mr George Reid (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** For just a minute, I want to take Parliament to the heart of Dixie: to Alabama, which shares with us the saltire as its flag; to the state capital Montgomery, which was built by Abercrombies, Grahams, McBrydes and McQueens; and to the middle of Montgomery, where stands the Tullibody

Fine Arts Center. I want to honour a Scot from Tullibody, William Burns Paterson, who, in the aftermath of the greatest catastrophe America ever experienced—the civil war, with hundreds of thousands dead and wounded—worked unceasingly in that society for justice, reconciliation and peace. He is virtually unknown here, but to millions of African-Americans he is a hero.

Paterson was born in 1850. When he left Tullibody for the United States, he took with him the priceless gift of the Scottish emigrant—though the son of a landless labourer, he was literate. In the United States, there were 4 million American ex-slaves, who were newly liberated but penniless. Some of them asked Paterson to help them to read and write, and he did so, teaching first in ditches, then in a shack and then in a permanent building, which he called, using the terminology of the time, the Tullibody Academy for Negroes. That body was to grow into Alabama State University, which was the progenitor of universal education for African-Americans. Paterson was its founder and he served as its president for 37 years.

Paterson said that education is liberation. It is the key to understanding the enemy. However, the forces of reaction and violence struck back. His school was burned down. He rebuilt it. His grant was withdrawn. He worked unpaid. The wise said, "Leave it to Washington," but he replied that on issues of conscience and humanity a man must speak where he stands. A scarecrow was put in the yard of the university and attached to it was a message to the "Scotch nigger teacher" telling him to go home to Scotland. When the Ku Klux Klan came next morning, they found Paterson in his rocking chair on the porch with, behind the curtains as they twitched, 15 ex-Confederate sharpshooters.

Today, Alabama State University, with 5,000 students, is a major centre of educational excellence that still turns out African-American teachers and scholars in significant numbers and is still loyal to Paterson's principles. It was in Tullibody hall—in Paterson hall—that students and academics planned the Montgomery boycott. When Rosa Parks sat down on a white seat, black America rose up, the civil rights movement started and segregation was ended.

In a speech to students, Martin Luther King paid tribute to Paterson's fundamental Scottish belief

"That Man to Man the world o'er,  
Shall brothers be".

Martin Luther King questioned whether violence could ever be justified and whether war could be justified. He said—in language that was strikingly similar to that used by the Church of Scotland this week—that it could be, if four tests were met: first,

that evil existed; secondly, that every remedy had been explored and put aside; thirdly, that violence had a higher moral sanction; and fourthly, that any action must not make a bad situation worse.

In "A Knock at Midnight"—a sermon to the students—Martin Luther King took up Paterson's theme and said:

"Isn't it true"

brothers and sisters

"that the rhythmic beat of ... discontent from Asia and Africa is at bottom a revolt against the imperialism ... perpetuated by Western civilization".

It is not yet midnight, but as the UK and the US address the undoubted evil of the Baghdad regime, I trust that they will remember the words of Martin Luther King and that, through William Burns Paterson from Tullibody, a wee bit of the soul and conscience of Scotland goes marching on.

16:07

**Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab):** I offer my contribution as we remember, and stand here shoulder to shoulder in sorrow with, all those across the world who continue to feel the pain of 11 September last year. We must remind ourselves that the debate is about healing, remembrance and hope for the future.

I will read some words from Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet". His words help me with the healing process following loss and I commend them to our friends across the world whose sorrows are so intense, even as we speak. I will then talk about a few of the famous Scots who, in the mists of time, helped to lay the foundations for the friendships and strong links that we in Scotland value with the people of America.

I will start with the words that I have chosen from Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet", as we remember the survivors of 11 September:

"Then a woman said, Speak to us of Joy and Sorrow.  
And he"—

Almustafa—

"answered:

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how else can it be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.

Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?

And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Some of you say, 'Joy is greater than sorrow,' and others say, 'Nay, sorrow is the greater.'

But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.

Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.

Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.

When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall."

I would like us to remember a little about some of the famous Scots who helped us to shape our combined history. Some of those connections find their origins in the kingdom of Fife. In the nearest main town to the constituency that I represent, Dunfermline opera house once stood. In 1955, the opera house was closed; it was eventually demolished and shipped to America, where it was rebuilt in Sarasota—a town that was founded by Scots. In the 1880s, Scots who were looking for a new start boarded steamer ships and set sail for Sarasota. It is believed that John Hamilton Gillespie, a Scottish aristocrat, lawyer and member of the Queen's bodyguard for Scotland, built America's first golf course in Sarasota.

In October, the convener of Fife Council will lead a delegation to Sarasota. I, too, will visit Sarasota on holiday in October and I pledge to do what I can, as a keen visitor of many years' standing, to support our links in America. Robert Lockhart, another emigrant Scot, laid out a course at Yonkers, north of New York city, in the following year. The subsequent club, the first in the USA, was named the St Andrews Golf Club in 1888.

In 1828 and 1829, women's education in America received a considerable impetus from the teachings of Frances Wright. Born in Scotland in 1795, well schooled and a friend of Lafayette and many free thinkers, Miss Wright helped to co-edit a newspaper in New Harmony on the Indiana frontier and later her own paper, the *Free Enquirer*, in New York. Miss Wright was a radical champion of equal rights for women. Andrew Carnegie, born in Dunfermline in 1835, emigrated with his family to Alleghany City, Pennsylvania, in 1848. He worked in a cotton factory, then as a telegraph clerk, becoming a superintendent in 1859.

Different waves of people arrived in America, and the American nation, made up of all those different peoples, offers our people in Scotland invaluable opportunities for enriching our way of life. We owe it to ourselves and to the people whom we represent to celebrate a heritage created by pioneers from Scotland. Our chance to cement friendships and forge new alliances is tremendous. Scotland knows America and America knows Scotland. We send the message

of the four words that are woven into the symbolic thistle of the Parliament's mace: wisdom, justice, peace and integrity. Those are the founding principles of the Scottish Parliament and I wish that the people of America, too, may be blessed with those words.

16:12

**Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP):** First, I send my condolences to the surviving families of the victims of 11 September 2001. I also send my condolences to the victims of the events of 11 September 1973 in Santiago, Chile.

In today's debate, I associate myself with the amendment that was lodged by John McAllion but that was, unfortunately, not selected. I do so for one simple reason. I do not believe that either the United Nations Security Council or individuals—the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom—have the right to go to war in a world that does not wish for that war. I certainly do not believe that the Prime Minister has the right to go to war against the wishes of 70 per cent of the British people.

It is sad that the opportunity for regime change was not taken in 1990, if the purpose of the Gulf war was to remove a leader who is, without doubt, an evil dictator. It is unfortunate that that did not happen then, but I suggest that, given the hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties that resulted from the Gulf war, it would be somewhat inappropriate to visit the same damage and evil on the innocent civilians of Iraq in current circumstances.

My straightforward plea is that, if there is a recall of the Parliament in Westminster, that Parliament should take note of much that has been said in today's debate. Members of Parliament should also take note of the fact that, daily, people are expressing their fears that we will go to war with a country and its people for the removal of a single individual. We believe that to be, in reality, a form of terrorism. If it is necessary for an entire population to be subject to military action for the removal of one individual, that creates a precedent across the world of which we should all live in fear.

It is all very well for those of us in the northern hemisphere and the developed western world to perceive that our freedoms are being threatened, but I have many friends currently living in the occupied west bank of Palestine who see British Land Rovers and machine guns and American aircraft, guns, tanks and armoured personnel carriers used against them daily. Prevented from having any education, they make the natural assumption that America must be supporting the actions that are being taken against them individually and collectively. We, as British

individuals—which I would rather not be—or as carriers of British passports, should be well aware that we are being identified in the same way in many parts of the world. As they say, what goes around comes around.

16:15

**Brian Fitzpatrick (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab):** This morning, when I came back from St Giles Cathedral, where Christians, Jews, Muslims and people of good will gathered together, I thought of how my religious tradition solemnly marks publicly and privately the passing of a relative or friend with the month's mind, anniversary masses for individuals' souls, the feast of the holy souls and the month of November for our prayers and remembrances for our dead. In my family, at a family mass, there will always be an older relative who reminds us to pray for our dead.

Today's events across the world join the calendar of commemoration. Above all else, today must be a day to grieve and remember our dead. We should remember who they were, why they died and reflect on our response to those events, to deny bin Laden and his gang of murderers the prospect of being the only names that will be remembered around 11 September.

We must remember not only the dead and those who suffered and still suffer from loss and injury, but the heroes—the firefighters, emergency services, the unknown people of New York who came out to help their fellow men and stood in line to give blood that, terribly, was never needed, and the women and men who fought their attackers above Shanksville in Pennsylvania, knowing that they were doomed but denying their attackers the indiscriminate slaughter that they sought.

Why should we debate better US-Scottish links today of all days? Part of the terrible tragedy of 11 September—a day of infamy—is that so many victims have no graves and their families have no gravestone. Throughout the world, we must look to build other, better memorials. The work that has been outlined today in building links is part of the process of rebuilding.

I can think of no better arguments for international engagement than those which Bill Clinton set out as he reflected on the events of 11 September at Harvard last year. He reminded us that people from 70 nations died at the World Trade Center. Irish and Italian Catholic firefighters died to save Muslims whom the terrorists died to kill. He argued forcibly that those who died in New York, at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania were part of a very different world and held very different world views from those who killed them. He did not underestimate the scale of the tasks

ahead in the coming months and years. He said:

“We are engaged in a struggle for the soul of the 21st century”

and outlined a progressive, but historically well-trodden path for US engagement with the international community.

We know that our collective security can be secured only through global action and interconnectedness. The former President recognised that our shared security is inextricably bound up with the economic and political stability of the rest of the world and continued:

“Victory for our vision depends upon winning the fight we are in against terrorism, on spreading the benefits, and reducing the burdens of the modern world, on changes in poor nations themselves that will make progress possible, and finally, on developing a global level of consciousness about what our responsibilities to each other are and what our relationships ought to be.”

That is how we can play our part—not as armchair generals or military strategists without locus or responsibility, but by the character of our responses.

Some people rightly talk about a special relationship. I am not sure about that. Our common language means that not only do we understand each other, we understand each other's nuance. Historically, our interests have often coincided. We share an accumulated history and we often think about things in a similar fashion. However, we are different places and the differences are sometimes more real than apparent.

It is not by accident that the United Kingdom and the United States share a special relationship of sorts, but as we look to the future, part of our response in Scotland must involve bringing forth new and better relationships with the United States. There should be better fora for the exchange of ideas and opportunities and we should use that shared conversation and engagement to engage with the wider world.

16:19

**Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I associate myself with Brian Fitzpatrick's dignified comments. All members are united in wanting to commemorate last year's horrific events. There can be no worse deaths than those which the people in the twin towers met a year ago today.

I have lived and worked in the United States, in New Hampshire, and some of my best friends are from the United States. In no way am I in the category of being anti-American. I like American people. America is a mixed society in all sorts of ways and the people have a lot to offer. On the whole, they are very genuine and warm.



However, although there is much to be admired in America, we should not confuse our friendship with the American people with our ability genuinely to dispute some of the policy positions of the American Administration. When we remember the people in the twin towers and consider why there is terrorism in the world today, we must relate that not only to what has happened in the past but to what might happen in the future. It is relevant to the debate that we discuss the Iraqi situation, because it is about the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States as well as between the different nations that make up the United Nations.

The SNP is not a pacifist party. We clearly gave our backing to the international community in its campaign against Saddam Hussein in 1990. We share the horror of what Saddam represents to the Iraqi people and to other people within that area, but that in itself is no justification for unilateral action that could destroy the lives of many innocent Iraqi people.

We must bear in mind the substantive points that Mike Rumbles made in his speech about the fact that we must deal not only with the effects of terrorism, but with the root cause of terrorism. I could think of nothing better designed to create more Osama bin Ladens in this world than if we go into Iraq and bomb the place to smithereens. That would create enormous resentment, not only in Iraq. Besides the inhumanity of doing that to innocent men, women and children, such actions would have a fundamental and immediate effect throughout the middle east and the rest of the world. When we consider possible military action of the kind that is being contemplated by the United States, possibly in alliance with the UK and the state of Israel, we must also examine the potential consequences of any such action.

Whether the objective is to change the regime or to get rid of weapons of mass destruction, there are different ways to skin the cat. If we skin the cat the wrong way, we could create a bloodbath in the middle east and a much more dangerous world in the future for ourselves, our children and our children's children. I therefore believe that it is right in a debate such as this, which is about our relationship with the United States, that we say to our friends in America and to the many politicians on the right and left of American politics who are opposed to unilateral action against Iraq that we share their misgivings and doubts and that we call on the Administration of America not to make the world an even more dangerous place by taking reckless action against the state of Iraq.

16:24

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** I am grateful to Brian Fitzpatrick for

reminding the chamber why we came here today. We came to spare a thought for the terrible happenings to innocent people on 11 September last year. My elder daughter got married on 22 September last year and because of the tragedy and disruption of world affairs, there were many empty seats at the table at the wedding feast. That brought home to us, on a personal level, how deeply the tragedy must have hit so many families.

We share a lot with the United States, whether it is through close family links or co-operation in many areas. We share mutual support at times of need and have done so for some time. We share the ideals of freedom and democracy, opportunity and aspiration, and social responsibility.

All members have connections with people in the US. Many of my neighbours in Aberdeenshire are American citizens who came to work in the oil industry, which is vital to the well-being and prosperity of the north-east. Although those people have kept their culture, they have integrated amazingly well. They tolerate our inadequacies and we put up with their little foibles—we are friends. Our children play together and go to school and university together. We exchange a lot and we should be proud of that relationship.

There are many connections with the United States in the fields of technology and academia. My background is in the pharmaceutical industry, in which there is great integration. The Parliament must try to promote even better linkages, not only for tourism, although that is important. In 2001, there were 3 million US-used bed nights in Scotland. That figure does not cover business tourism.

The debate is about more than our relationship with the US. I am grateful to be given the opportunity to speak in it. My one comment about Iraq is that I am disappointed that General Schwarzkopf was denied the chance of removing Saddam Hussein. Terrorism must not be tolerated in any form. The United States of America and its people of all ethnic roots are in our minds today, as we remember the horrors of last year. The greatest memorial to those who died or were bereaved is for life to go on as normal. To allow terrorism to rule our lives is to give up on democracy. We must be prepared to stand up for democracy, side by side with our American friends.

16:27

**Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab):** As the member for Midlothian, I am pleased to have the opportunity to take part in the debate and to highlight two examples of how our close relationship with the USA benefits my constituency. I will also mention the SNP amendment.

A couple of hundred yards from my constituency office in Dalkeith is Dalkeith House, which is known locally as Dalkeith palace. The house, which is owned by the Duke of Buccleuch, has for 15 years served as a base for about 100 students and staff from the University of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin in Scotland programme offers students the opportunity to fulfil their course requirements in a setting that is far removed from Wisconsin. During their 15-week spell in Scotland, students learn much about Scottish history, politics and culture through lectures, field trips and internships. I take this opportunity to welcome Alex Brust, who is in the public gallery and who is an intern with me from the University of Wisconsin.

The University of Wisconsin also runs the summer in Scotland programme, which brings more American students to Midlothian. The programme uses Newbattle Abbey College, which is Scotland's only residential college for adult learners. Students are encouraged to participate in volunteer work and to give something back to the town that hosts them. I want to put on record the contribution that the staff and students of the University of Wisconsin make to Dalkeith and to Midlothian.

The world-leading bioscience institutions in my constituency also benefit from a close working relationship with American partners. Researchers in Scotland and the USA have much to learn from one another. In February, the Scottish Executive funded a £6 million collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and Stanford University in California. I welcome that development. Further such partnerships between the US and Scotland can only benefit the Scottish economy.

It is with some grief that I turn to the SNP amendment. The nationalists, under John Swinney, have once again shown themselves to be completely out of touch with the public mood. On a day when we should be expressing sympathy, support and solidarity with the American people, the SNP has once again resorted to political posturing by raising an issue that is properly a matter for the UK Parliament at Westminster.

Every year in April, the SNP journeys to the USA to seek American support for its over-romanticised policy of independence; yet it has come here to launch an insensitive attack on the USA on today of all days. That is a hypocritical and tawdry tactic, which does the SNP no credit whatever. To American citizens who are in the public gallery—and across the world, watching on the internet—I express my embarrassment at the fact that the SNP is behaving in this shameful way. I assure them that the opinions that are being expressed by SNP members do not reflect the views of ordinary Scots, but are merely desperate measures from

an increasingly desperate party. I urge Parliament to ignore the nationalist nonsense that we have heard and to reject the SNP amendment.

I ask Parliament to stand by our American friends on this special date and to continue to support the development of the positive relationship between America and Scotland in the months and years ahead. I call on Parliament to support the motion.

16:31

**Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD):** It is a privilege to speak in this debate, in which we are remembering the events of 11 September last year. Those events affected not only the 3,000 people who died but the thousands of others who have been left to mourn—indeed, the entire world is mourning in one way or another. The World Trade Center was a microcosm of the entire planet, as Brian Fitzpatrick summed up very well.

This is also a chance to remember and to strengthen the ties between our countries. We have a shared history; an approximation to a shared language; a shared belief in democracy; a shared character of innovation, good humour and hard work; and an overwhelming belief in the rights of the common man and woman. John Swinney, not surprisingly, referred to the declaration of Arbroath and the American declaration of independence, which was modelled on it. Half the signatories of the declaration of independence were Scots. There, at the very heart of American democracy, lies the political heritage of this country. Annabel Goldie also reminded us that 11 American Presidents claimed Scots heritage, alongside 20 million of their countrymen and women.

Earlier this year, I was privileged to represent the Scottish Parliament at tartan day in New York and Washington. Everyone whom we met in New York had a story to tell. Everyone knew someone who had been at the twin towers—at dinner, I sat next to somebody whose daughter's boyfriend had been killed that day—or had seen the events for themselves.

There are three points that I will remember from my trip. Although it was important to meet politicians, captains of industry and American academics, it is three moments that were spent with ordinary Americans that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Marching along Sixth Avenue with 8,000 pipers, I saw the pipes that had played such a big part in the lives of New Yorkers over the previous weeks. Pipes that they had heard playing laments were, on that day, playing with pride in our common heritage. It was touching to hear ordinary New Yorkers shouting out to us from the sidewalk,

“Thank you. Thank you.” It was unbelievable. In Washington, at Arlington, where we laid wreaths at the memorial cairn to those other victims of terrorism, the victims of Lockerbie, all of us were touched when we met the American families of those who had died in the skies above Scotland. One family decided to bury their daughter here, and ever since have felt that they are coming home when they visit her grave, which is tended by local people from Lockerbie.

Finally, along with Liane Dorsey, the American consul, Sylvia Jackson and I went to ground zero. Sometimes it is difficult to find the right words. I have never found a more silent place on the planet than ground zero. It was an incredible silence, and all the images that we had shared on our television screens came back to me as I stood there. When I read the messages that had been left by children and others—I left a little lapel pin badge on behalf of the three of us, as it was the only thing that we had to leave—it all seemed totally pointless.

Nonetheless, in the midst of terrible evil we can remember some good things. We can remember the heroic acts of the firefighters, the policemen and policewomen of New York and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey whom Tommy Sheridan talked about. We can remember that in the midst of all that there was heroism and people reminding each other that they loved one another. In the face of hate, people could remember that the most powerful thing in the world is that love.

We can remember that good will ultimately triumph over evil. However, good does not triumph by stooping to the same level as evil. As a former Scottish organiser for the United Nations Association, I believe that the democracy in which we believe and the fight against terrorism will be strengthened by America and our country working through the United Nations to build again a coalition for action that will be worthy not only of the memory of those who died in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, but of those who might yet die in Iraq.

Woodrow Wilson said:

“Every line of strength in American history is a line coloured with Scottish blood.”

I would argue that every line of strength in American history is where America has worked alongside others and harnessed and supported the rule of international law.

We have heard much in the debate of the ties that bind us. Those ties have bound us together in war and in peace. There are companies in my constituency that trade all the time with America, as do companies elsewhere in Scotland. It is not just about war but about peace. I applaud the fact

that we now have a Scottish affairs office in the British embassy in Washington and that, through events such as tartan day, Parliament and the people of Scotland will continue to work hand in hand and stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of America. However, we must take stock today and say that we do not go forward together if we do not say what we believe in our hearts to be true.

16:37

**Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con):** Until today, if anyone had asked what was the great “Where were you at the time?” event, it would have been a tragic event that happened back in the 1960s: the death of John Kennedy. We all remember where we were on that night—or at least those of us who are old enough do. Now there is a new event in our minds. The horrors of 11 September are clearly established and engraved in our minds.

Johnston McKay asked earlier, “Where were you?” I can remember well. We were in the chamber and we went into the room behind where we saw the shocking scenes on the television screens. It was almost beyond belief that such a thing could happen, but it did.

Has there been an awakening since then? Johnston McKay suggested that there would be hope for change. What change has happened over recent years? Perhaps if we go back to the era of détente and the collapse of the Berlin wall, we find a situation from which great changes were expected to come. Perhaps from what happened last year on this date we can expect better attitudes to prevail in the world. Perhaps that is the message that we should take from such a debate. We must seek a goal that has been long avoided, which is to achieve peace throughout the world. It will be a long hard struggle. We have struggled for years and there are many miles to go, but perhaps we will get there one day.

We have no problem in giving full support to the motion. I could equally have accepted John Swinney’s amendment, up to the point where it refers to the mutual benefit of both countries. Sadly, I feel that John Swinney has been railroaded by some on the leftist wing of his party who wanted to bring in a discussion on Iraq on this occasion. That was misplaced.

However, in the great part of his speech, John Swinney addressed the issues and covered the historical links between Scotland, the United Kingdom and the United States. He presented an excellent case as to why there is a special relationship. Miss Annabel Goldie did similarly when she spoke of the historical links and great Scots who helped to establish America, such as

Dr Witherspoon, James Wilson and Alexander Hamilton.

George Reid made a passionate speech, but it was bang in line with the aspirations of the Executive for this debate. I accept and respect John McAllion's passion and his integrity on these issues but, quite honestly, John McAllion and Dennis Canavan opted out of the place where those issues should be debated, which is Westminster. I hope that Iain Duncan Smith's recommendation today will be picked up by the Prime Minister and that, in the next few days, we will hear an announcement that there will be a debate on the matter in Westminster.

**Alex Neil:** Will the member give way?

**Phil Gallie:** I have no time.

When that debate comes, I hope that it will be an informed debate. Much information has still to be released and any debate in this chamber today would have been ill-informed. Members do not yet have all the facts. When the matter is debated in Westminster, I hope that those facts will be before the House of Commons and that members will be able to enlighten people in this country. There is perhaps nothing more important than a decision to send our young men off to war, with the result that families will be bereaved. There has to be a good reason to do so and that reason must be properly presented by the Government.

As a son of Dunfermline, I have great affinity with Andrew Carnegie. Helen Eadie mentioned the removal of the Dunfermline opera house. I remember fondly the pantomimes that were performed at the opera house on boxing day. This boxing day, I hope to be in America but I do not suppose that I will get to the opera house. I would do so if I could as I would love to renew that link.

That is just one of the links between Scotland, the United Kingdom and the United States. David Davidson commented on the oil industry's link with education and the fact that we have much to learn from people from across the Atlantic, just as they have much to learn from us. As Rhona Brankin hinted when she talked about her intern, the Scottish Parliament is already a place where people from the USA are learning a little from politicians in Scotland.

16:42

**Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** This debate has been serious and, as John Swinney said it would be, sombre. I should start by praising members of all parties—and, indeed, of none—for the way in which they have approached the debate. Correctly, the main focus has been 11 September and the memories that we have of that day, but the debate has also dealt with the cultural

and historical links between our countries and the response to the events of 11 September in relation to Iraq.

There have been a number of great speeches on the subject of the educational links between our countries and I want to spend some time reflecting on the impact of the Scottish enlightenment in that regard. Yesterday I read, in Professor Arthur Herman's book on the Scottish enlightenment, that there are more descendants of Highland clans in the USA than there are in Scotland. That is a good starting point for thinking about the free flow of traffic between our countries.

As other speakers have said, Adam Smith and David Hume had an enormous influence on American thinking and the American constitution through the impact that their work had on people such as Thomas Jefferson. Ted Cowan, the professor of Scottish history at the University of Glasgow, talks about the "Mac-ocracy"—a typical Ted Cowan phrase, in that it is ghastly but gets its point across. The idea behind the word is that so many Scots went to America that they were able to take it over and mould it in a dynamic way. Ted Cowan quotes another historian, Bernard Aspinwall, as saying that the Scots acted as

"the shock troops of modernisation"

and goes on to say that they were the battalions who would help to transform an agrarian community into a mighty industrial power. Those lovely words adequately describe the position of Scots in America.

The role of the Presbyterian church in the United States has been enormous. It is worth remembering that, between 1726 and 1837, Presbyterians founded some 65 academies or log colleges in America. In doing so, they left a long-term mark on that country.

George Reid made an excellent speech, to which I assume Phil Gallie was only half listening. I thought that it carried a powerful but subtle message. Perhaps it was the subtlety that fooled Phil Gallie. The speech was a case study, but it had strong resonance for the here and now and for the international situation. Perhaps Phil Gallie should reflect on that resonance.

On more modern times, I have been involved in tartan day for the past three years, as many members know. Anyone who has been to tartan day—I know that many members have—will tell of the enormous opportunity that it is for Scotland and the incredible good will that exists. Tartan day has turned into a massive celebration of Scottishness in America. Most important, it is an indigenous American celebration—not an imported Scottish celebration—of the Americans' heritage.

Between 9 million and 22 million people in

America claim to be of Scots descent. Those figures have been quoted already. I did a lecture tour with Alex Salmond, who, as members know, has a fairly good conceit of himself. At the first lecture that he gave, he was given the information that there were 9 million of Scots descent in America. By the last lecture that he gave, it was 22 million and Alex was taking all the credit. Perhaps that was the most successful lecture tour in history. The proportion of Scots Americans is certainly enormous. The point of all the background in history and culture is that when we celebrate the rich history of America, we in part celebrate ourselves.

On 11 September, there has been a great deal of talk about where everybody was when they heard the news and the fact that the American people are still grieving for their loss and loved ones. That is a raw emotion. We remember the 3,043 people who died, 100 of whom were UK citizens. As Brian Fitzpatrick was right to remind us, people from 70 different countries—Scots included—died in that tragedy. Thirteen hundred children were orphaned on a single morning.

That is why the amendment in John Swinney's name starts off by recognising the strength,

"dignity and courage shown by the people of the United States of America in the aftermath".

Anyone who has followed the coverage of 11 September one year on can do nothing but reflect on the courage of the Americans. They dealt with that enormous, almost unimaginable, tragedy with huge dignity. It is right that Scotland's national Parliament acknowledge that today.

We are faced with the question of whether we should discuss the war. Annabel Goldie's comments and latterly Rhona Brankin's comments, not the SNP amendment, were inappropriate and in poor taste. There is a suggestion that it is somehow inappropriate to discuss the war on 11 September. Members should ask themselves what people in America are discussing today. They are remembering, but they are also anxious about the future and discussing their country's involvement in the international community.

It is right that we express our voice in the Parliament. If the Executive is to represent the Parliament in continual negotiations and discussions with the UK Government—which, sadly, is still responsible for our international policy—it is right that the Executive know what people in Scotland think. That is why we were elected. They are whom we are in the Parliament to represent. There is a responsibility and obligation on each of us to meet the challenge head on and not to duck it. We are here to reflect the mood of the people, not what we wish the constitutional set-up to be.

I ask members to reflect that the one thing that separates us from the dictatorship that we might be moving to overthrow is that we believe in democracy, discussion and debate and it does not. To lose sight of that is perhaps to have lost already the putative war.

A number of suggestions have been made on the international coalition that are only worth batting to the side. We should not confuse the call for restraint and to work through the United Nations with a dilution of support for the war on terror. It is not. Consider the position of Chancellor Schröder, who said:

"Consultation among grown-up nations has to mean not just consultation about the how and the when, but also about the whether. It is the duty of good friends and allies to speak clearly to Washington as Americans speak clearly to others."

There is a lot of sense in that.

Members should not imagine that we are being in any way anti-American. I quote former American President Jimmy Carter:

"We cannot ignore the development of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, but a unilateral war with Iraq is not the answer. There is an urgent need for U.N. action to force unrestricted inspections in Iraq. But ... this has become less likely as we alienate our necessary allies."

Other world leaders are urging caution too. I do not have time to go through exactly what they say, but I will list them: Nelson Mandela, President Chirac, the Russian Prime Minister, President Mubarak, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. They are all urging restraint. They are all asking that the United States go through the UN Security Council. That is the way forward—it is the absolute requirement. Would it not be a bitter irony if, in our attempts to overthrow a dictatorial regime, we were to end up doing so undemocratically?

16:50

**The Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning (Iain Gray):** In closing today's debate, I speak to the motion. Its clear purpose is to mark the anniversary of the attack on New York and Washington that took place one year ago today, and to do so by noting our positive links with the USA.

Some speakers have used the occasion to debate the issue of military action against Saddam Hussein, and the SNP's amendment sought to turn this afternoon's debate to that matter. It is their prerogative to do so, but I think that it is misplaced. I ask members to believe me when I say that I have seen war and its effects close up; I have seen the aftermath of ill-judged intervention; and I have seen the appalling consequences of a failure to intervene against a regime that held life in contempt. Those matters are of the greatest

import—we all hold strong views about them. However, this afternoon we should address the subject matter of the motion.

Scotland was getting to grips with the impact of globalisation on a small, open economy such as ours when the 11 September attacks happened. Our approach to the economy was born from a recognition that we had to focus on growing our own businesses, developing our own skills and fostering global connections. Overnight, all that work became even more relevant, as, like all other countries across the world, we realised the profundity of the global economic links that exist today.

There is no doubt that Scotland has suffered from the economic after-effects of 11 September. Perhaps tourism has been most obviously affected, but other industries, such as the technology sectors, have also had to cope with post-11 September uncertainty and the consequent serious global slow-down. As we address that situation, one of the factors in our favour is the depth of our historical, cultural, philosophical, business and economic links with the United States. As Rhoda Grant and Annabel Goldie—among other speakers—said, we must work to expand those connections.

Scottish Development International offices in the USA build on those links and have an extensive reach from north to south and from coast to coast. Our California office is the hub of our activities on the west coast in the high-tech electronics and venture capital sectors. On the east coast, our Virginia and Stamford offices have helped to forge links with many leading academics and entrepreneurs, particularly in the biotechnology and financial services fields.

Of course, John Swinney was right when he said that we should not forget that inward investment has been a major feature of Scotland's economic links with the USA in the past 20 years. Despite the fact that the proportion of inward investment jobs created by US-based firms has dropped from 48 per cent to 33 per cent over the past 10 years—that drop may not be as big as we sometimes imagine it to be—I am in no doubt that it will continue to be important to engage with major inward investors, not least because they have much to teach us about best practice in research, innovation and productivity.

We also have productive links in the main US centres of California and New England, whose investors are interested in backing specialist fields that sometimes find it difficult to get support from within Scotland. Several leading Scottish companies, such as Compound Semiconductor Technologies, Photonic Materials, Kamelian, Kymata and Cyclacel have already benefited from recent US investment. By developing such links

further, we will allow Scottish academics and business people to benefit from a vast body of expertise in the process of funding and commercialising innovation.

Many Scots have crossed the Atlantic and built successful lives and careers in the USA. There are far too many to mention, although the debate has featured some examples, from Alexander Hamilton, in banking, to Andrew Carnegie. Those connections are as alive today as they ever were. Scottish Enterprise's globalScot network recognises the need to unlock the potential of today's equivalents of Carnegie and Hamilton in order to help Scotland survive and thrive in the global economy. The globalScot network already has 400 founding members, more than half of which are based in the USA. Those senior individuals are willing to help us to open doors abroad for Scottish business and, by sharing their experience, they are willing to help us to develop home-grown expertise, for example by offering positive role models to Scottish schoolchildren.

Several members have commented on the fact that Scots have traditionally demonstrated what they can do after going to America. We must bring back that enterprising entrepreneurial approach. We must repatriate it and apply it here in Scotland.

Many members have mentioned that some of the strongest links between Scotland and the US are in education, particularly in higher education. It is well known that the American higher education system was modelled on Scotland's—it shares a pattern of initial breadth followed by later specialisation. The link is not merely historical. Students from the USA form the largest group of overseas students in Scotland. Rhona Brankin provided examples from Midlothian. They study at all levels, from undergraduate to postgraduate, and often stay on, as teachers and researchers, to enrich our university faculties. The growing number of American students who come to study in Scotland—the figure now stands at more than 1,500 per year—represent a transatlantic link that we should cherish.

Among those students, we welcome a small number of Marshall scholars. The Marshall scholarship scheme, which will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, commemorates the humane ideals of the European recovery programme in the aftermath of the second world war—the Marshall plan. The scheme provides the finances for a small number of high-ability young Americans to study for a degree in the United Kingdom.

What is true of the classroom is true of the common room and the laboratory. The academic community is truly international. Benjamin Franklin, no less, was a founder member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. That transatlantic link

remains strong—next month, the RSE will host a lecture on Hugh Miller's influence on transatlantic environmental awareness.

There are countless examples of connections in teaching and research between Scottish universities and their US counterparts. The link between the University of Edinburgh and Stanford University has been mentioned. The Edinburgh-Stanford link is a five-year collaborative programme, which is worth £6 million. It aims to establish Scotland as a global leader in the commercial development of language technology and to boost our reputation as a centre for research and design.

There are many other ways, from the long-standing to the very new, in which our academic community reaches across the Atlantic. I want to focus on just one of them, the Colin McArthur postgraduate scholarship at the University of Glasgow. The award, which has been provided as a lasting tribute to a Glasgow graduate, Colin McArthur, who died in the events of September 11, has been supported by his widow, his friends and his colleagues, as well as by alumni and friends of the university. It will enable a student who lost a parent or guardian in the tragic events to attend the university to study any chosen discipline. The university hopes that, in time, enough will be raised to endow the scholarship in perpetuity and it seeks, eventually, to extend the terms to cover any US student.

Of course the tragic events of last September dented the confidence of the US. That was reflected in transport links—people stopped travelling for a while. Those links are important to us and a strong recovery is taking place. We want to encourage the development of our air links with the US. The re-establishment of the link between New York and Glasgow in 1998 has proved an undoubted success. Direct access to the US and to the Newark hub of Continental Airlines provides a wealth of opportunities to travel throughout the Americas. American Airlines also provides scheduled links to the US and there are charter links to Florida. Such links are important, because people mediate our connections, whether they are business, family, academic, cultural or sporting connections.

I was at the World Trade Center, as part of a holiday, a few weeks before 11 September last year. It is odd what one remembers when one thinks back. I remember a covered walkway that was mirrored all round in the New York style. People who passed underneath would see their reflection from a strange angle when they looked up. Our links with the US are like that—we see ourselves reflected back because there is so much of Scotland across the Atlantic. Like all reflections, the image is not always identical. Sometimes we

may like what we see and at other times we may not be so fond of what we see, but we cannot escape the reflection of ourselves.

Similarly, we cannot escape the impact of moments in time such as 9/11. All kinds of previous history, actions, decisions and politics converge from all directions on such a moment. All kinds of potential consequences flow from it. However, in the moment itself, and when we talk about where we were, the world stops. Our heart stops too at the tragedy and suffering and heroism, which were above and beyond all normal days. 9/11 was like that. We can analyse the roots of the moment; we can, and should, debate what should happen next or now; but we should also pause in all sincerity to mark apart the moment itself. That is what today is for.

At a different time and for a different tragedy, a great American writer wrote:

"The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places."

We all need that to be true now for the United States. That is why our links matter so much now. Support the motion.

## Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** We come now to consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S1M-3378, on the designation of lead committees.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as Lead Committee in consideration of—

the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Fees) (Scotland) Order 2002 (SSI 2002/389); and

the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Divorces (Fees) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/390).—[*Euan Robson.*]

## Decision Time

17:02

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** The first question is, that amendment S1M-3368.1, in the name of John Swinney, which seeks to amend motion S1M-3368, in the name of Jim Wallace, on Scotland's links with the United States of America, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### FOR

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)



Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)  
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 30, Against 60, Abstentions 18.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The second question is, that motion S1M-3368, in the name of Jim Wallace, on Scotland's links with the United States of America, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament notes the educational, historical, cultural and economic links between Scotland and the USA and wishes to see these developed and enhanced to the mutual benefit of both countries.

**The Presiding Officer:** The third question is, that motion S1M-3378, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on the designation of lead committees, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as Lead Committee in consideration of—

the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Fees) (Scotland) Order 2002 (SSI 2002/389); and

the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Divorces (Fees) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/390).

## Ferry Services (Northern Isles)

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** The final item of business today is the members' business debate on motion S1M-3325, in the name of Mary Scanlon, on ferry services to the northern isles. Those leaving the chamber should do so quietly to allow Mary Scanlon to open the debate.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes with concern the on-going situation surrounding the transfer of the contract for ferry links to the northern isles; recognises that these services provide a crucial lifeline for island communities and businesses, particularly the agriculture and fishing industries, through a substantial volume of passenger and freight transport, and considers that the Scottish Executive should ensure that ferry links between the mainland, Orkney and Shetland are maintained into the future.

17:04

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I am pleased to have secured tonight's debate. I trust that the dignity that has pervaded this afternoon's proceedings will continue into this debate.

I visited Orkney during the summer recess and returned with pages of notes about the ferry issue. It seemed more appropriate to raise the issues in a members' business debate than by writing screeds of letters to the minister. There has been much speculation over the new ferry contract. I hope that members will appreciate from my careful use of "alleged" and "I understand" that the main communication channel for people in Orkney has been the local media, in particular *The Orcadian*. There has been considerable local speculation.

Today, I look for an assurance on the long-term security of transportation of goods, livestock and passengers to the northern isles. I am not looking back to find out who was, or was not, to blame for the current situation.

I understand that a Scottish Executive tender document to replace the P&O service did not mention the movement of livestock. That seems to underpin the problems that we face today. I further understand that NorthLink Orkney and Shetland Ferries Ltd advised the Aberdeen harbour authority that lairage would not be required because of the cassette system coming into operation. Lairage was promptly dismantled. New lairage is now being installed in Aberdeen—at, naturally, a considerable cost.

I also understand that, because the P&O contract ends this month, the Scottish Executive has had to hire two boats. One is coming from Australia and the other from South Africa—again

at considerable cost to the public purse—to maintain consistency in the transportation of livestock. Bearing animal welfare considerations in mind, have all other routes been considered fully, especially given the existence of the new abattoir facilities at Dornoch and the new regulations on the transportation of animals? Orkney farmers and businesses seemed to like the previous Orcargo system to Invergordon. I would like to be assured that all the options have been explored.

The new piers at Scrabster, Stromness and Kirkwall are well behind schedule and, apparently, well above their original budget. May we have a clear statement about those costs, as well as about the cost of the linkspan from Invergordon, which has been taken to Stromness as a temporary measure?

The company with the subsidy for the northern isles ferries will be NorthLink, yet, in the middle of all this change, we have a new shipping company representing the interests of Shetland—Norse Island Ferries Ltd—including main contractors such as Jim Brackenridge (Transport) Ltd, Gulf Oil Ltd, Shetland Transport Ltd and Northwards Ltd. Those developments, alongside the progress of Smyril Line, which is partly owned by Shetland Islands Council, provide excellent opportunities for Shetland, but Orkney tends to be left out of the equation. NorthLink has a subsidy of £11.5 million while Pentland Ferries Ltd and Norse Island Ferries have no subsidy. Both those independent operators are carrying substantial volumes of traffic.

It has been suggested that subsidy should be based on the amount that each operator carries. Retrospective payment of subsidy seems to respect customer choice and reward the operator that is providing the lifeline service. Farmers, businesses and passengers have said that they would like to choose which ferry to use. They say that companies should earn their subsidy.

NorthLink is slashing its freight rates now that Norse Island Ferries is in operation. Given that its business case was based on original costings, will the minister tell us the effect on NorthLink of a decrease in revenue? Can it continue to provide the promised service? Will NorthLink continue to cut charges to price other operators out and then rest back on the subsidy? That question has been raised with me and I would appreciate an answer from the minister.

I have also been told, today, that the new Norse Island Ferries is undermining confidence among people in Orkney now that Shetland has decided to go it alone. There is a feeling that Orkney will get the crumbs from the table. A Sunday-only service for the transportation of livestock, with any spare capacity being used for Orcadian cargo, is hardly the way forward. I am sure that the

constituency member for Shetland will enlighten the Parliament about the new service. I am pleased to see that both Tavish Scott and Jim Wallace are here.

Unfortunately, the new service leaves the profitability of the Orkney to Aberdeen route in doubt, as it depends on Shetland through traffic. The Norse Island Ferries service may lead to financial problems for NorthLink or, it has been suggested, a massive increase in Orkney fares. We must also ask why Orkney Auction Mart has to pay off a £4.3 million loan for the new cassettes when that is a lifeline service.

In the midst of all the public money for hired boats, high subsidies and massive, multimillion pound investments into piers and linkspans, we have Andrew Banks, a farmer from St Margaret's Hope in Orkney, who bought a 30-year-old CalMac ferry, dredged the sea, built two piers and now runs the service from Gills Bay, near John O'Groats to Orkney, which is cheaper than the subsidised route and takes only one hour. I can testify to the quality of that service, as I used it during the summer. I understand that Andrew Banks has applied for the livestock subsidy, but has not yet received a response from the Scottish Executive.

I was also given the figures for Pentland Ferries. From April to November last year, the passenger numbers were 45,000 with more than 16,000 vehicles. Both those figures were exceeded by August 2002, with a massive increase in tourism business for Orkney. This week, Mr Banks purchased a second vessel, the Claymore. The Claymore has the same capacity as the Pentalina B and will operate freight and livestock between Caithness and Orkney every day of the week. That is all without a penny from the public purse.

There are many issues at stake. I will mention one more—a topic on which we could spend a whole debate. P&O employees understood that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations would apply to their change of employment. I now understand that NorthLink is stating that P&O workers will be taken on as new employees and that their previous service and conditions will not be taken into account. I would like clarification from the minister on that point.

I understand that the Transport and the Environment Committee is looking into the ferry services. Will the minister ensure that all parties get round the table in talks to ensure proper consultation and communication about the changes? Will the minister give me an assurance that costs are being monitored against the original estimates and that costing is based on best value for the public purse?

I look forward to the minister's positive response, to update and assure people in the northern isles who are deeply concerned about the change in the service.

17:12

**Mr Jim Wallace (Orkney) (LD):** I congratulate Mary Scanlon on securing the debate. I have represented the northern isles in a parliamentary capacity for the best part of 20 years and I think that I can say that most issues come back to transport—the affordability, reliability and frequency of the transport services, not least the lifeline ferry services.

When I first became an MP in 1983, we did not have new boats. We are now going to have new boats. There was one sailing a day for most of the year between Orkney and the Scottish mainland. When I suggested that, even during the school holidays, that could be increased to two sailings, I was told that I did not understand the economics of the case. Now we will have far more frequent services. Also, we now have services linking Orkney and Shetland, which did not exist in 1983.

Having seen the new vessels at the Akers yard, having been on the Hjaltland just before it set out on its sea trials and having seen the Hamnavoe and Hrossay under construction, I believe that the quality of vessels coming into the service is a major step forward in standards.

Mary Scanlon has identified several concerns. I know that the minister will welcome the opportunity to clarify several points. There is much discussion around the subject because there is a major change to something with which we have been familiar for many years. It is inevitable that there will be concern in the air. One of the obvious concerns relates to livestock and the entry of Norse Island Ferries. That has caused uncertainty and some delay in placing the orders for the cassettes. Once they have seen the system in operation, even the sceptics about cassettes believe that it is a system for the future that will secure high animal welfare standards.

The main concern is that although there will be welcome contingency arrangements—indeed, additional boats are brought on every year for the peak livestock movements—there might be a gap. There is concern about what will happen after that contingency period and before the cassettes are in place. I would welcome any assurance that the minister can give. I am sure that he will recognise that the sooner the cassettes are in operation, the more confident people will feel, especially when they can see the system working.

Mary Scanlon mentioned Pentland Ferries and Andrew Banks. Following representations from Andrew Banks, I have written to the minister, as

he knows, about tariff rebate subsidy—TRS—for that service. As has happened for many years, the application will be given as proper and fair a consideration as any other. It is not a right: there are criteria. The issue of TRS for that service will be approached in that spirit.

Many of my constituents who sail into Scrabster have been saying that they have not seen much happening. The project has been slow. Everyone knew that the project would have to happen: even if P&O had won the contract, there was a need for improvements at Scrabster harbour. I share Mary Scanlon's view that we do not want to trade questions of blame or who is responsible. Perhaps the minister could reassure us about what is expected to happen at Scrabster. It is clear that it will not be in a position to receive the new vessel when it comes into service. Perhaps the minister could tell us what the time scales are and what is likely to happen to maintain that important Pentland firth crossing between Stromness and Scrabster.

My next point is about staff transfer. I fully understand that it is not for the Government to determine whether TUPE applies. It is a matter for the courts. My understanding was confirmed as recently as last week in a letter from Bill Davidson of NorthLink. Although TUPE does not apply, NorthLink will take on the existing mariners under their existing terms and conditions.

What I find frustrating—I believe that the minister shares my frustration—is that we can get a legal determination of the situation only when the staff transfer takes place. I welcome the fact that the minister has raised the matter with the appropriate minister at Westminster, because employment legislation is a reserved matter. The situation is unsatisfactory. With the tender for the Caledonian MacBrayne routes coming down the track, we would welcome some clarification of what the minister has been trying to achieve.

As this is the first speech that I have made from the back benches, I will not abuse the time. I just emphasise the point that the issue is critical. We are talking about lifeline services—and so much of the social and economic life of the islands depends on those services being secured well into the future.

17:17

**Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** When I was first elected to the House of Commons, for Hamilton in 1967, the first thing I did was visit Orkney and Shetland for the first time in my life. I did that because, when I was sitting down in London, I wanted to know what it was like to be in the furthest away places that London controlled. I have been a regular visitor over the years ever since.

I even once had the temerity to stand for the Westminster constituency of Orkney and Shetland, but I am afraid that I did not win. In fact, as members know, Jim Wallace won. I will never forget the happiness of the experience. We went to every island we could get to and I have been in love with them ever since. I visited all of them many times, except for Papa Stour, which I never managed to get to. I think the weather prevented it.

I have probably visited every company, most schools and every social organisation over the decades that I have been going to the islands. The people of Orkney and Shetland are very innovative. They sometimes have a difficult climate—they say that Orkney can have four seasons in a day—but the people are full of enterprise and there are many business start-ups. One can only admire the people and say that they deserve a lifeline service that suits them.

It seems to have been suggested that NorthLink has, wisely, been trying to boost the tourist side of its business. However, the tariff structure seems to be a bit biased against the island resident. I cannot accept that.

Everyone knows about my envy of Norway because it has its own Government. Norway also had two policies when it started considering the northern part of the Arctic circle. Those policies worked very well. They were road equivalent tariffs and equalised freights. I admire and envy the Norwegians for those two policies, because they were successful in doubling their northern population in the area up to the Arctic circle in 50 years, which speaks for itself.

I cannot add much to what Mary Scanlon said, because her speech was an exhaustive survey of all the problems that I have seen when I have gone to the northern isles. The residents of both sets of islands are worried by the uncertainty. NorthLink itself admits to uncertainty about the running costs, which throws uncertainty over all the economic, agricultural, social and cultural activities of the islands. It also throws uncertainty over sporting activities, which are developing well. As Mary Scanlon said, there is uncertainty about the P&O workers' terms. Although Jim Wallace's comments are welcome, there is still a worry. I hope that the minister will clear up some of the issues at the end of the debate.

17:21

**Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I thank Mary Scanlon for giving us the opportunity to debate this issue, which must be aired. As a Highlands and Islands MSP, and as reporter to the Transport and the Environment Committee on the future of the Clyde and

Hebridean ferry services, I have been interested to explore the experiences in the northern isles with the NorthLink contract as a point of comparison with the CalMac tender.

In the past year I have been to Orkney three times and to Shetland twice, and the major issue that people raise—no matter whether one is connected with the Transport and the Environment Committee—is anxiety about ferry services. It is right that MSPs should take time to debate the matter, because there is a great deal of anxiety about the transfer of ferry services on 1 October. There are concerns about the long-term viability of the NorthLink service, and there is uncertainty surrounding the application of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

First, I have examined the service that is envisaged, and it will be much better than the current service. Jim Wallace is right to say that only when the service is going will we know how good it is. However, it looks like fares will be cheaper and that the superb new ships will be faster. We cannot discount those positives.

When I was in Orkney and Shetland, I found that the councils, the enterprise companies and the tourist boards were excited about what the new ferries could deliver if everything went well. On the other hand, farmers, hauliers and industries such as aquaculture had serious concerns about the way in which NorthLink was handling the transfer and whether it could deliver for them. It is reasonable to expect those sectors, which rely for their livelihoods on the continuation of the ferry links, to be anxious not to be left high and dry with a worse service on 1 October. They did not get a sympathetic hearing from NorthLink, so it is essential that NorthLink try to mend fences with those sectors in Orkney and Shetland.

I am seriously concerned that with competition from Norse Island Ferries and the introduction of a second ferry by Pentland Ferries, the economic sustainability of NorthLink could come into question. I am particularly disappointed that a rival freight service has been set up in Shetland as a result of dissatisfaction with NorthLink. That could have been avoided with proper discussions and negotiations. However, the reality is that NorthLink and the Executive now need to double their efforts to run a viable service in the long term, because if that is not possible, the people who will lose out will be the islanders.

The ferry services are lifeline services. I am sure that farmers, hauliers and others do not want to be left in a position in which they have to rely on a private monopoly and on cherry-picked routes, in the same way that the community of Dunoon is worried about the possibility of a private monopoly crossing the Clyde. Inevitably, that would lead to

the need for either huge additional subsidies on unprofitable routes or for massive increases in fares for the people of the northern isles. That cannot be allowed to happen.

Concerns are being expressed about TUPE. NorthLink has said that TUPE regulations do not by law apply to staff, which concerns the work force. The question that the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers posed hits the nail on the head—is it right that workers will be able to test whether they are protected by TUPE or whether they should have been made redundant only after the transfer has taken place?

I appreciate that, as the Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning told the Transport and the Environment Committee only today in another context, the only way in which to judge whether TUPE applies is through the courts, but that leaves workers in a potentially difficult situation. I appreciate that Westminster would be required to legislate, but I urge the minister to continue his efforts to make representations about the issue to his Westminster colleagues.

I understand that the pier at Scrabster will not be ready in time for the new vessel and that the Hamnavoe ferry could lie idle until the pier is ready. I hope that the Executive will do everything that it can to ensure that progress is made and that the new ferry is fully operational as soon as possible. Then, we will see the benefit to the islanders.

I hope that, with a change of personnel at the top of NorthLink, relations between the company and communities in Orkney and Shetland will improve. Serious questions remain about the long-term viability of the service and about the TUPE regulations. I hope that the minister will address them in his response.

17:26

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I congratulate my colleague Mary Scanlon on bringing the debate to the chamber. I have written letters to ministers and asked questions in Parliament about the subject. As a Highlands and Islands MSP, I find that ferries are causing great worry and uncertainty all over the place.

It is surely necessary that ferry services in Scotland be given the highest priority, because our nation, like Norway, has a large number of inhabited islands. However, islanders in Norway seem to receive better services than our own people. Apart from the northern isles ferries, I have been involved recently with many worried people in Dunoon, who have been led to expect that one of their main vehicle-carrying services

from Gourock will soon carry only passengers. That will add huge inconvenience to the local population of Dunoon and Cowal, and make it increasingly difficult to present Dunoon as a main gateway to Scotland's first national park, which it was hoped would bring increased prosperity to the town.

Only this morning, I heard on Irish radio that the Ballycastle to Campbeltown ferry will not operate until at least next summer, which is enormously frustrating for the people of Campbeltown and Kintyre, not to mention those who are involved in the new factory, which is building renewable energy turbines. Why is Argyll and Bute, with a Liberal MSP and a Liberal MP, losing its lifeline ferry services? It is because a combination of blanket European directives and the coalition Government's policies are driving down the level of ferry services in Scotland, which is disastrous for the outlying communities that depend on them.

Great concern has been expressed about NorthLink ever since the partnership was envisaged. My main experience of it has been through the concerns of farmers and the National Farmers Union about how livestock will be transported from Orkney and Shetland. Shetland and Orkney are highly dependent on cattle and sheep farming, and only the best transport will enable the island farmers to produce quality in order to achieve a profit and to survive. There has been enough trouble with foot-and-mouth disease, and the Orkney farmers lost their vital cattle-marketing link through Invergordon last year.

The first blow occurred when, without public consultation, livestock was banned from passenger-carrying ships. The cassette system was proposed, in which animals are loaded in tiers into containers where they await transfer to ships. A similar system in the early 1970s ran into trouble because such a double-decker carriage adversely affects a ship's sea-going properties. Only two ships that were built for that system remain, and one—the Hascosay—is being refitted to take the new cassettes. We are told that the system will be ready by 1 October, but so far, not one production model has been finished.

What will happen if the Hascosay breaks down? Where is the replacement vessel that will take cassettes? Orkney Auction Mart is worried and farmers are very worried, but that is unsurprising when livestock was overlooked in the original so-called lifeline subsidised contract that was given to NorthLink. That appears to be a public-private partnership that will result in an inferior service to Shetland and Orkney. How can Orkney, with a Liberal Deputy First Minister, and Shetland, with an ex-minister as its MSP, find their services deteriorating? Is there a link between Shetland and Orkney and Argyll and Bute?

Not only farmers lost confidence—the salmon farming industry that is vital to Shetland was so shocked by NorthLink's proposed freight increases that Shetland has been forced to organise its own freight service to Aberdeen.

The problem is that NorthLink's Orkney to Aberdeen viability relies heavily on through traffic from Shetland, so there is already more uncertainty over the long-term future of NorthLink, even before a ferry has sailed. There is more uncertainty for passengers, for Orkney and Shetland businessmen and for P&O Scottish Ferries workers, who may not be covered by TUPE pension rules when they transfer to NorthLink. They and the people of Orkney and Shetland deserve better treatment, and I seek assurance from the minister that they will receive it.

17:30

**Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD):** I welcome Winnie Ewing's continuing visits to Shetland, particularly at Up Helly Aa. I notice that, two years since his last visit there with Mrs Ewing, Duncan Hamilton has only just recovered.

I welcome the opportunity to make a brief contribution regarding lifeline services to my constituency and that of the Deputy First Minister. The issue is far too important for our constituencies to be used as a political football, as the Tories have just done, and I will play no role in that kind of behaviour.

I agree with Maureen Macmillan. For many years, I have shared her frustration about the way in which things have evolved, and I have felt particular frustration in the past year with regard to NorthLink. The situation has changed, and I hope that it has changed considerably for the better in recent weeks, but I wish that the change had happened somewhat earlier. It is incumbent on Tory members to get their facts right in such situations. There are important details that I hope the minister will be able to clarify, but it is extremely important to separate some of the issues that relate to TUPE and the specific classification of employee we are talking about.

I would like to make three points, the first of which relates to TUPE. The separate transfer of crew, who will at least have employment with NorthLink on 1 October, is quite a different issue from the situation of the shoreside staff who work in Holmsgarth, in Mr Macdonald's Aberdeen constituency and in Orkney. The crew members will have to wait to see what the redundancy payment position is. That will be sorted out under TUPE regulations at some point, probably through a court of law or industrial tribunal. That is unfortunate and there is no question about that, but that position will at least work out.

I am more concerned about the current members of P&O Scottish Ferries staff who will simply not have a job on 1 October. I cannot conceive of any circumstances in which they should not receive redundancy payments from P&O, as their employer. They are not transferring to another employer and they will be redundant, so I believe that redundancy payments should apply to them. I hope that, in winding up, the minister will be able to inform the Parliament that that is the position, that he will support the calls that Jim Wallace and I have made for that position to be upheld, and that P&O will pay due redundancy to workers who are in that situation. P&O still refuses to confirm that those workers are due redundancy. That is nonsense—there is no transfer, so the payment of redundancy money must be upheld.

My second point relates to livestock. Livestock boats are not new, if I may say so gently to Mary Scanlon. Livestock boats have been servicing Orkney and Shetland for many years during the peak shipping season—September, October and November. They are not a new phenomenon. The ships are not a lifeline only for cars and passengers but also for livestock. In relation to her work as reporter to the Transport and the Environment Committee, I would like to tell Maureen Macmillan that I was pleased to note that the original draft tender mentioned livestock. I hope that in the tendering exercise in five years' time, those matters will be dealt with appropriately again. It is a source of some disappointment that that point was not retained in the draft specification.

A number of other members have made pertinent points about TRS. In delivering a reliable, affordable and regular service for exporting and importing livestock to the northern isles, it is extremely important that the TRS system is available to the two new companies—Andrew Banks's company and Norse Island Ferries—in circumstances where they comply with the appropriate regulations. I welcomed the minister's confirmation to the Transport and the Environment Committee earlier this summer that that would indeed be the case, and I hope that he will confirm that again today. I hope that he will also confirm that it will be his objective in handling the TRS applications.

To wind up, I look forward to attending the naming ceremony for the Hjalmland in Lerwick on Saturday and to shaking hands vigorously with NorthLink's management and congratulating it on introducing the first new ferry to service the northern isles for 50 years. That is no mean achievement and the minister and the Executive should take due credit for it. There will be a welcome step change in the quality, safety and comfort of the service for islanders. I welcome that step change, but details need to be clarified. We

hope that the minister will clarify one or two important points that have been made in this brief debate.

17:35

**Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I thank Tavish Scott for his good wishes for my health. I have just about recovered from Up Helly Aa. I could just about have managed with Winnie Ewing—although partying with her is always difficult—but to take her and four Orkney councillors was beyond me. I was nearly a hospital case.

I have a number of brief questions, some of which have been covered. Constituents have raised directly with me a number of issues and I would like clarification on them.

There is a fear that passengers will need to make up the estimated overall drop in income, as a result of the potential loss of freight, through an increase in fares. I understand that fares for next year have been fixed, but will the minister clarify what will happen thereafter? There is a real fear that fares will increase. If the tender has been won by an operation, 50 per cent of which, I assume, is Caledonian MacBrayne, will the minister have any opportunity to reflect on the tender specifications on the CalMac routes in the CalMac tender, where there is a minimum service requirement and a maximum fare requirement? If that is possible in that tender document, will the minister, as a 50 per cent owner in the other part, tell us whether the same would be possible in this situation?

I reiterate what Tavish Scott said about the urgency of the situation in respect of staff. We are talking about many shore-based staff who will not be retained—I understand that they will be out of work in two weeks' time. Therefore, the matter must be resolved urgently. Anything that the minister can do to hasten such resolution would be appreciated.

On whether TUPE applies to those who are transferring, I return to a previous question. If the First Minister is the sole shareholder of CalMac and it is 50 per cent of the consortium that has won the tender, would it be worth exploring the avenue that I mentioned? I do not know the answer to that—I merely pose the question. Perhaps the Deputy First Minister has not tried to influence the First Minister. If he has not, perhaps he should consider doing so in a back-bench role. The other question that has emerged is: what will happen to the service status of those who are transferring? Will they be credited with full service status? Any light that the minister can shed on that matter would be greatly appreciated.

I will stop there, as I have asked the minister at least 10 questions.

17:38

**The Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning (Lewis Macdonald):** I thank Mary Scanlon for providing an opportunity to debate such an important subject and all members who have contributed to the debate for the constructive way in which they have done so.

Reliable and affordable ferry links to the mainland are critical to Orkney and Shetland and the Executive is committed to safeguarding such lifeline services to Scotland's island communities. We are determined to ensure that we safeguard such services in a way that is affordable to users and the taxpayer, while recognising the vital importance to the islands of ferry connections and services.

We are required by European Commission rules to tender public subsidy contracts—including the northern isles ferry contract—every five years. A couple of members have mentioned that we are currently preparing to tender ferry services in the Clyde and Hebridean isles. Tendering for the imminent northern isles contract started in 1998. The tender is for passengers and accompanied cars only, on the same basis as the existing contract with P&O Scottish Ferries. As before, we were bound to accept the lowest bid that met the service specification and, on that basis, NorthLink's bid succeeded. It has been mentioned that it is bringing in three new, larger vessels that are built to the latest safety standards, more frequent services and substantially lower fares.

First, I would like to address the issue of livestock. It is worth noting that livestock are outside the subsidy contract. That is not something new nor is it something that we have invented; it has been inherited and was operated under previous Governments when active competition for livestock carriage was perhaps greater than it was in 1998-99, when we drew up the current contract.

I will correct a couple of factual inaccuracies. The livestock vessels that have been chartered this year to meet the immediate needs this season have been chartered by P&O, not by the Scottish Executive. P&O has done that every year for a number of years, so there is nothing new about it. It is not the case that the demolition of lairage at Aberdeen was a pointless exercise. That had to happen to allow work to begin on the new terminals required for the new and larger vessels that will be used.

One of the major concerns has been the future of the livestock shipments. Members have all recognised the importance of livestock to the islands' economies. The worry has been about the position after 31 October, when the P&O service will end. My understanding is that NorthLink now

plans to carry livestock in livestock transporters that have higher sides than the standard general livestock transportation and so which are more suitable for the larger Orkney cattle. That provision of livestock transporters will meet the need in the immediate period following 31 October. There is a good deal of confidence that cassettes will be on stream and will arrive soon thereafter.

As has been described, there has been considerable uncertainty about those proposals, but I now understand that Orkney Auction Mart, which is the main facilitator in providing the cassettes for use on NorthLink vessels, or other vessels, will place its orders shortly. The time from placing the orders to delivery of the cassettes should be in the order of 16 weeks, so they will be in place well before next year's peak livestock season.

I also understand that NorthLink is actively considering buying some single-deck cassettes, as well as double-deck ones, and will, if necessary, carry those on its passenger and vehicle ferries. I think that that will allay any remaining concerns.

Members have mentioned that other carriers may wish to apply for tariff rebate subsidy. That subsidy can be made available to any operator who satisfies the key requirements of the scheme. All applications are considered on that basis and there will be a level playing field.

Likewise, freight lies outside the current contract. As we know, last week Norse Island Ferries started a roll-on, roll-off freight service from Shetland that is in competition with P&O and ultimately will be in competition with NorthLink, when it takes over the service at the end of the month. It is for the companies in question to resolve their commercial interests in meeting that competition. It is for NorthLink to meet that competition as a commercial company; it is not subsidised for the provision of freight. It has to satisfy us, by providing an annual account and annual performance indicators, that it is not using the subsidy that we provide for passengers and accompanied cars to subsidise its freight carriage. Therefore, it is a matter that NorthLink will have to deal with in the usual way.

Of course, it is no surprise that NorthLink is concerned about competition; any commercial company would be. NorthLink looks to make a profit from its freight carriage and it is for it to do that by providing a competitive service. We do not regard competition for freight as a bad thing and it is not new. If competition has the effect of providing a better service for customers in due course, that will be welcome in the islands.

A number of questions have been raised about harbours. Responsibility for harbour developments



rests with the harbour authorities. They have responsibility for bringing forward the necessary works on time. There have been delays, which in the case of Scrabster will go beyond 1 October. That is to be regretted. It is for Scrabster Harbour Trust and its contractors to resolve the problem. In the meantime, until NorthLink's vessel, the Hamnavoe, which will serve that route, is ready, I understand that a charter arrangement is in place with CalMac. We will work actively with them and with other interested parties, after the Hamnavoe is available, to ensure that that lifeline service continues to ply the route between Stromness and Scrabster. I hope that members will be reassured that it is our commitment to do that. We will work with all interested parties to ensure that that is done.

The transfer of undertakings is a critical issue. There is a particular legal difficulty relating to TUPE. The system was inherited from a previous Government and, in the case of the northern isles, has been shown to be unsatisfactory in two respects. First, it is not clear until the point of transfer whether TUPE applies to particular members of staff. Secondly, the incoming operator gave guarantees from an early stage to seafarers, but not to shore staff. That has operated to the disadvantage of shore staff.

I understand that P&O intends to pay a loyalty bonus to staff who stay with them until 30 September and who have not been offered a job by NorthLink or one of its contractors that has terms and conditions that are substantially equivalent to those that they enjoy at present. The bonus, which is equivalent to 13 weeks' pay, means that no one will leave the company without either a job in the successor operator or a significant cash sum. I welcome that, although I realise that it does not address the whole issue, which is why I raised the matter with my colleagues at Westminster, as members have acknowledged. We do not want a situation to arise again in which people face uncertainty late in the day.

The transfer of the ferry contract to NorthLink has been a complex process, but it will be the single biggest improvement in ferry services for the northern isles in 50 years. There will be three new vessels, more sailings, new harbours and terminal facilities and lower fares. P&O Scottish Ferries has served the northern isles well over the years and I am sure that many islanders will want to pay tribute to the company. I am also sure that many islanders will look forward to the step change in provision that will take place in the northern isles in a few weeks' time.

*Meeting closed at 17:47.*



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**Wednesday 18 September 2002**

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