

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 2 June 2004  
(*Afternoon*)

Session 2

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## **SCOTTISH MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS**

FIRST MINISTER—Right hon Jack McConnell MSP  
DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER—Right hon Jim Wallace QC MSP

### **Justice**

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE—Cathy Jamieson MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE—Hugh Henry MSP

### **Education and Young People**

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE—Peter Peacock MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE—Euan Robson MSP

### **Enterprise and Lifelong Learning**

MINISTER FOR ENTERPRISE AND LIFELONG LEARNING—Right hon Jim Wallace QC MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENTERPRISE AND LIFELONG LEARNING—Lewis Macdonald MSP

### **Environment and Rural Development**

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT—Ross Finnie MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT—Allan Wilson MSP

### **Finance and Public Services**

MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICES—Mr Andy Kerr MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICES—Tavish Scott MSP

### **Health and Community Care**

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE—Malcolm Chisholm MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE—Mr Tom McCabe MSP

### **Parliamentary Business**

MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS—Patricia Ferguson MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS—Tavish Scott MSP

### **Communities**

MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES—Ms Margaret Curran MSP  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES—Mrs Mary Mulligan MSP

### **Tourism, Culture and Sport**

MINISTER FOR TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT—Mr Frank McAveety MSP

### **Transport**

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT—Nicol Stephen MSP

### **Law Officers**

LORD ADVOCATE—Colin Boyd QC  
SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Mrs Elish Angiolini QC

## **PRESIDING OFFICERS**

PRESIDING OFFICER—Mr George Reid MSP  
DEPUTY PRESIDING OFFICERS—Trish Godman MSP, Murray Tosh MSP

## **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY CORPORATE BODY**

PRESIDING OFFICER—Mr George Reid MSP  
MEMBERS—Robert Brown MSP, Mr Duncan McNeil MSP, John Scott MSP, Mr Andrew Welsh MSP

## **PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU**

PRESIDING OFFICER—Mr George Reid MSP  
MEMBERS—Bill Aitken MSP, Mark Ballard MSP, Bruce Crawford MSP, Patricia Ferguson MSP, Carolyn Leckie MSP, Tavish Scott MSP

## COMMITTEE CONVENERS AND DEPUTY CONVENERS

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Local Government and Transport	Bristow Muldoon	Mr Andrew Welsh
Procedures	Iain Smith	Karen Gillon
Public Petitions	Michael McMahon	John Scott
Standards	Brian Adam	Mr Kenneth Macintosh
Subordinate Legislation	Dr Sylvia Jackson	Gordon Jackson

2 June 2004

## Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 2 June 2004

(Afternoon)

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

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** Good afternoon. The first item of business, as it is every Wednesday, is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Dalai Lama—to whom I say tashi deleg, welcome, fàilte. He will reflect on the words engraved on the parliamentary mace: compassion, wisdom, justice and integrity.

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama:** (consecutive interpretation) Presiding Officer, honourable members of the Parliament and distinguished guests, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to be able to visit this unique Scottish Parliament. In one way it is a very old Parliament, but at the same time it is a new Parliament.

*His Holiness the Dalai Lama continued in English.*

I think that there are some similarities between my situation and your concern for the preservation of your identity, your culture and spirituality. I think that I could learn something from your experience.

I appreciate having the opportunity to say a few words to the Parliament and its members—I admire the democratic system. I believe that each individual has the potential to create a better world—a better family. It is a great honour to lead time for reflection in this marvellous new Parliament.

Wisdom, justice and compassion are universal values. You are here because you have been elected by your own people. Those people have put a lot of trust in you and a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. If in fulfilling the expression of their wishes you carry out all your works according to those universal principles, your satisfaction will be deeper and that deep satisfaction will last until your last day. Sometimes, short-sightedly, we consider more immediate benefits, but that does not bring satisfaction in the long run. That much I want to say. Thank you. [*Applause.*]

## Point of Order

14:35

**Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. As leader of the parliamentary Labour Party, I seek your ruling on a point of order relating to the rights of back benchers.

The motion that we are about to debate did not appear in the *Business Bulletin* until today. That means that although the business managers had a copy and could lodge amendments, that right was denied to back benchers and, I suppose, to independent members also. Mr Swinney's actions might be within the letter of paragraph 6 of rule 8.2 of standing orders, but they are certainly not within the spirit. They also make it difficult for you to exercise your duty to take account of the interests of members equally under paragraph 3 of rule 3.1 of standing orders. I understand that this practice is against your guidance and I ask whether a breach of standing orders has occurred and for your guidance on how rules can be tightened up to give all members a fair crack of the whip.

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** As there seem to be no further points of order, I say to Mr McNeil that the Scottish National Party did not break any rules by lodging the motion yesterday. However, Presiding Officer good practice guidance has existed since 1999, and it requests that all motions due for debate are lodged two clear days in advance in order to give others the chance to consider amendments.

Are there any other points of order?

**Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (Ind):** Further to that point of order, Presiding Officer. If the rule of the Parliament is that motions should be lodged two clear days beforehand to allow for reflection on the part of back benchers and others, was today's motion in order and was it in order for you to accept it?

**The Presiding Officer:** I chose my remarks with some care and if you had listened to them, Mrs MacDonald, you would know that I did not use the word "rule". I said that no rules were broken and that good practice has been established since 1999.

If there are no further points of order, we will get on. [*Interruption.*] I am sorry. Ms Ferguson has a point of order.

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Patricia Ferguson):** I had indicated that I wanted to speak by pressing my request-to-speak button.

I have heard the response to the points of order and I feel that I have to add something because it

is not just about process; it is about the courtesies of the Parliament, which are also observed in standing orders. The normal practice has been for business managers to bring their issues to the Parliamentary Bureau so that the bureau knows what is going to be discussed in Parliament. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the issue was trailed in the newspapers on the Sunday prior to the bureau meeting on the Tuesday. That point was made to the SNP business manager at the time.

In spite of that, I understand that last Thursday the SNP held a press briefing on the issue and that that was followed by a press release from Mr Swinney. Perhaps it is no surprise that that was then followed by a press release from Mr Salmond. That was discourteous enough, but it was then followed by a phone call from the SNP that indicated that because of staff sicknesses, it could not submit its motion until Monday, which was a holiday. In effect, that means that the motion was not submitted until Tuesday and, as colleagues have said, it could not appear in the *Business Bulletin* until Wednesday. There has been a discourtesy to the Parliament and that is also covered by standing orders. I would be grateful if you could look into that matter, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** I do not have much to add to my previous statement that no rules were broken, but good practice should be observed.

The debate is heavily subscribed so let us get on.

## International Situation

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, and four amendments to the motion.

14:39

**Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):** Now we can get on with the important issues of the day.

Today, Parliament has the opportunity to debate the current international situation, an issue that affects us all, and to set out a way forward for the people of Iraq and for the United Nations.

Throughout the life of our young Parliament, the Scottish National Party, together with others, has sought to ensure that Scotland's national Parliament takes a stand on the great international affairs of the day. We have given Parliament the opportunity to discuss the future of Europe, the conflict in Afghanistan and the build-up to war in Iraq. The staging of such debates has provoked varying reactions from the SNP's opponents. At first it was hostility, then indifference and now participation. The participation of all parties in these international debates has led to some of the best debates that this Parliament has seen. That journey from hostility to participation is one that I welcome. It is now accepted—on all sides, I hope—that the Scottish Parliament has, in my view, the right and the duty to debate international affairs.

Ironically, it was the British Government's chief international ally, President Bush, who said:

"Every nation has a stake in this cause."

He is right: our nation has a stake. That is why the SNP, together with a growing number of parties, believes not only that Scotland should have the right to debate the future of the United Nations, but the right to participate in the deliberations of the United Nations as a full and equal member.

A Scottish voice in the UN should be a different voice from that provided by the British Government. It should be a voice raised in opposition to illegal war and in defence of the founding charter of the United Nations. Further, it should be an expression of our country's desire to play a legal part in global reconciliation and conflict resolution. The SNP motion encapsulates a vision of what I believe is our country's true international calling.

We are debating in the aftermath of yet another terrorist atrocity. The events of recent days in Baghdad have been traumatic and have resulted in tremendous loss of life. In Saudi Arabia, one of



our countrymen, Michael Hamilton, was among those killed in the latest terrorist outrage. For the terrorists, who so callously take innocent lives, there should be no hiding place and no excuses. Action to hunt down the terrorists is justified and necessary. Such action must be global in its reach and must involve Muslim and western countries fighting together to defeat a common enemy. However, the war in Iraq has not brought the world together; it has torn the world apart. Before the war, there was no evidence of links between Iraq and al-Qa'ida but there is plenty of evidence of those links today. In a report last week, the International Institute for Strategic Studies said that the occupation of Iraq had provided a potent global recruitment pretext for Osama bin Laden. The institute said that around 1,000 al-Qa'ida fighters are now operating in Iraq and the editor of the report, Jonathan Stevenson, said:

"Invading Iraq damaged the war on terror. There is no doubt about that. It has strengthened, rather than weakened, al-Qa'ida".

Given the shocking images from Abu Ghraib jail, that is a sentiment that no one can disagree with. The mistreatment of Iraqi detainees was sickening and, for justice to be done, the people who gave the orders—not just those who carried them out—must be investigated and punished.

One of the clear consequences of that conduct is that there will be many in the Arab world who now express contempt whenever they hear talk of western values. Western values will also be brought into question by the abandonment of the road map to peace in the middle east—a road map put together quickly to argue the case for war and just as quickly dumped when war was joined.

Without doubt, the invasion of Iraq—and the consequences of how the conflict was started and has been pursued—has created a more unstable world.

**Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab):** The member will be aware that, like him, I opposed the war in Iraq. I, too, am concerned about the global situation. However, I have to question why he did not bring this debate to the chamber before today. Would it not have been better to have done so before now? Could it be that we are having this debate as the SNP's platform for the election next Thursday?

**Mr Swinney:** The SNP brought two debates to this chamber before the war in Iraq commenced last year. We are having this debate today because this happens to be the biggest issue that is affecting our country and it is right that the Scottish Parliament should have a say on the issue at this time.

**Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):** Can Mr Swinney indicate how many debates SNP

members at Westminster have lodged on this matter in the past six months?

**Mr Swinney:** I advise Irene Oldfather to speak to the House of Commons member for Cunninghame South, if she can bear it. He will tell her just how much debating time the Scottish National Party has in the House of Commons. We have taken the opportunities that we have had to bring this issue to the fore in the House of Commons.

If we are to create a safer Iraq and a safer world, we must examine, recognise and tackle the roots of the instability that now afflicts our world. First, never again can there be such cavalier disregard for international law and the United Nations as was shown last year by the United States and the United Kingdom. Before, during and after the war, attempts were made to justify its legality, but none has been convincing. Few believe that United Nations Security Council resolution 1441 legitimised military action. Earlier this year, the prominent new Labour Queen's counsel Baroness Helena Kennedy said that the vast majority of lawyers believe the conflict to have been unlawful and that she could think of probably only two lawyers who believed that the action was legal. The Government and the Attorney General relied on one of those lawyers for advice. The war broke international law.

The second factor that we must examine is the fact that the overriding reason for going to war—Saddam's weapons of mass destruction—has proved to be a fiction. In the Prime Minister's introduction to the Government's September 2002 dossier on Iraqi WMD, Tony Blair told the British people that intelligence

"has established beyond doubt ... that Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons"

and

"that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons".

We now know that at the same time as the Prime Minister was telling us that the intelligence had proved "beyond doubt" the full extent of Iraq's WMD programme, some of the most damaging claims from single discredited sources were being made. We also know that, far from having no doubts about that information, some senior intelligence officials were expressing very real concerns about the authenticity of the claims. In short, it is hard to square the Prime Minister's assurances with what we know today.

This is not just a case of innocent mistakes being made. There is now overwhelming evidence of deception—evidence provided by the Bush Administration itself. Speaking about his now infamous presentation to the UN Security Council, the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, made that

much clear. He said:

"It turned out that the sourcing was inaccurate and wrong and, in some cases, deliberately misleading."

"Deliberately misleading"—those are the words of the United States Secretary of State. In other words, the case for war was based on a lie. The Prime Minister should have the good grace to admit that fact now.

I have set out the background to the situation that we are in today. To move forward, we need a new and convincing commitment from all countries to respect the decisions of the United Nations and we need honesty about the mistakes that were made and the deception that was carried out. Most pressing of all, for the people of Iraq we need security on which to base an agreed political settlement.

On an issue that has caused such disharmony, there is, however, widespread agreement about what is required. Most people believe that political control should be handed over to a new Iraqi provisional Government by 30 June. Most people agree that democratic elections should be held before the end of this year. Most people agree that the current security situation is getting worse, not better. The worsening security situation has led in part to the recent announcement of the deployment of the Black Watch back to Iraq.

**Hugh Henry (Paisley South) (Lab):** The SNP group of councillors in Renfrewshire has described American and British forces in Iraq as thuggish. Does Mr Swinney agree with that description? If he does not, will he condemn it?

**Mr Swinney:** Mr Henry said that it was a perception. I am sure that there are people in Iraq who believe that British and United States forces are thuggish. Unfortunately for the way in which this country and the United States are perceived, some soldiers have behaved in a thuggish fashion. We should condemn them unreservedly for what they have done in the Abu Ghraib jail.

**Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con):** What evidence does Mr Swinney have that British troops have acted badly? Allegations made in the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Daily Mirror* were found to be unsubstantiated and false.

**Mr Swinney:** Mr Gallie made an accurate point about those allegations, which were made only in the *Daily Mirror*. However, in terms of the conduct of United States and United Kingdom forces, I would be prepared to listen carefully to what Amnesty International has said about such issues and, into the bargain, the British Government would do well to pay a little bit more attention to what organisations such as Amnesty say.

Scottish troops have been put in a position to carry out their duties and they will do so in a

professional and dedicated manner. However, their deployment in Iraq is an illustration of the disastrous US and UK answer to the deteriorating security situation there. For the US and the UK, the answer is more of the same and more troops. At first sight, the two Governments' UN Security Council resolution on the future of Iraq appears to argue for change; it promises an end to the occupation by 30 June and, overnight, a deadline for the withdrawal of troops has been proposed. However, nothing will change.

The Prime Minister made it clear last week that the multinational force should remain under American command. It is precisely the fact of that American command that is a major factor in the current unrest. The forces that fought the war are now largely seen as an army of occupation and armies of occupation cannot create peace in the sphere of action in which they are involved. We need look only at the condemnation of the actions in Fallujah or Najav to see evidence of those points.

A number of factors make matters crystal clear. The reality of the American occupation of Iraq presents a compelling case for change to the steps that have been taken there. The current set-up is turning into a nightmare. An army of occupation cannot be an effective peacemaking force. We cannot follow the approach that the US and the UK propose. To provide the stable political environment that is needed for democracy to prevail, we need an alternative. One alternative would be an immediate withdrawal of troops, which is a course of action that is set out in the Scottish Socialist Party amendment. I opposed the war, but it is not good enough to argue simply to leave the Iraqis to their fate. Whether we like it or not, we have created this mess and we have a duty to help clear it up.

A second alternative would be the continuation in Iraq of a multinational force, but with a country other than the US in charge. Such an approach has its attractions, but it presents difficulties in finding an acceptable and willing country to take command. The other alternative is to put the UN in charge of a force, with the agreement of the Iraqi people, pending full Iraqi sovereignty. That would put the UN at the heart of the process.

Today the UN looks battered by events surrounding the war in Iraq, but, paradoxically, there is an historic opportunity. By helping to rebuild security and peace in Iraq, the UN can rebuild confidence in the ideal of collective global action for the good of humanity. The founding charter of the UN is a source of inspiration and hope, with its affirmation of faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and the worth of the human person. Throughout its history the UN has not always lived up to its fine words, but it is

still, as President Kennedy said 40 years ago, the world's last best hope.

Our proposal therefore is this: that a UN force, made up of troops from a range of countries, but preferably from Islamic countries, should replace the current US-commanded force. There is every reason to expect such a force to be effective. First, there is broad agreement on a political settlement in Iraq, which is an important prerequisite for the deployment of a blue-helmet force. Secondly, Muslim countries, notably Pakistan and Malaya, have expressed a willingness to commit troops to Iraq, but only if the UN is in charge. Thirdly, a UN force is likely to be more acceptable to the local population if it is predominately made up of Islamic troops. Indeed, early in the discussions about the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the British Government proposed a similar arrangement for that country.

There are, of course, difficulties. I recognise that the UN Secretary-General has talked of the problems with such an approach. It will require a political and practical commitment to the UN from western countries, which sometimes appear happy to allow less wealthy nations to shoulder the burden of peacekeeping. It is also not an overnight solution. However, the prize is clear: the restoration of security in Iraq to allow democracy to flourish and the restoration of authority in the UN to build a better and just world.

In recent days, we have seen yet more confusion in the political arrangements in Iraq. The role of the United Nations in the process of appointing the provisional Government has been brought into question and there have been disputes over how the interim Prime Minister has been chosen. That demonstrates the necessity for a democratically elected Government that commands the support of Iraqi citizens. That will come about only if there is effective peacekeeping, stewarded by the United Nations, to allow that opportunity to arise. At this pivotal moment for the future of our planet, the United Nations has an opportunity to demonstrate its worth to humanity. As part of the global community, we in Scotland have a right and a duty to speak up.

The debate centres around three distinct positions. The Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat amendments argue for various shades of the status quo in Iraq. The SSP amendment leaves the Iraqis to their fate. The SNP position argues that the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in healing the conflict and in delivering long-term peace and stability for the people of Iraq. I urge the Parliament to support the motion.

I move,

That the Parliament reaffirms its support for the United Nations and its belief in the primacy of international law; believes that the war in Iraq was both illegal and based on

a deception as evidenced by the failure to find weapons of mass destruction; believes that as a consequence the world is now a more dangerous place; notes that the unstable security situation and the current rules of engagement within Iraq have led to the coalition forces being seen as an army of occupation, and believes, therefore, that to promote future stability in Iraq any foreign troops on Iraqi soil should be brought under UN command and that current coalition forces should be replaced, on a phased basis, by those drawn from non-Western, preferably Muslim, countries pending the restoration of full sovereignty and the consent of the Iraqi people.

14:56

**Mr Andy Kerr (East Kilbride) (Lab):** As I listened to Mr Swinney's speech, I reflected that there stood a man who never had to make a real decision in his life. He is a man whose only concern is to hold on to the reins of power in his own party and, as I looked at his back benchers, I reflected that he was not making a very good job of that either. He has no principles, no vision, no fortitude, no courage and absolutely no experience.

Let us not forget that Iraq was not a benign place before the coalition took action. It was a country degraded, with 60 per cent of its people on food aid, few freedoms and, for those who opposed the regime, terror, punishment and mass graves. I note that Mr Swinney took time to condemn only the British armed forces, never taking one moment to reflect on Saddam Hussein's regime. That is pathetic. The graves that Saddam's henchmen dug and filled with human beings are a bitter sign of how that country was. Kurds were killed because of their ethnicity, Shiites because of their religion, Sunnis for their political views, and Egyptians, Kuwaitis and Iranians because their lives meant nothing to Saddam, his sons or their followers.

Let us look closely at the SNP motion. It says that the war in Iraq was

"illegal and based on a deception".

No, it was not. Britain's engagement was founded on the agreement of the UK Parliament within the law. No court has ruled the war illegal and let us remember that action was taken only after 18 UN resolutions. Nor was it based on deception; that is a matter of nationalist opinion, not a matter of fact. The war was not based on US or UK intelligence alone. Every major country believed that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction existed. In the country itself, a month before the war, what were the Kurds doing? The Kurds were preparing for a chemical attack, reinforcing their experiences of the 5,000 of them who were gassed at Halabjah in 1998 by Saddam Hussein.

**Mr Swinney:** Will the member give way?

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP):** Will the

member give way?

**Mr Kerr:** Mr Sheridan should sit down. I do not intend to take an intervention from him.

**Mr Swinney:** I am grateful to Mr Kerr for giving way. I would like to take him back to the issue of deception, because he was in danger of deceiving Parliament in his remarks. He said that it was my assertion that deception had been undertaken. Did he not listen to what I said in my speech? I said that Colin Powell had said that he had been deceived about that information and that, as a result, the world had been deceived. Why is Mr Kerr not big enough, as Mr Powell was big enough, to say, "For that, I am disappointed, and I regret it"?

**Mr Kerr:** Of course, hindsight is a wonderful thing, and I have some hindsight from Campbell Martin, who said that the stance of John Swinney and the SNP hierarchy was based on opportunism and not at all on principle.

Hindsight is a great thing, and what I was trying to explain was that every nation in the world, almost bar none, believed that there were weapons of mass destruction. That is the appropriate point, if SNP members would care to listen. The SNP has said that, as a result of the coalition action in Iraq, the world is a more dangerous place. The world is a more dangerous place, of course, because of terrorism. What about the twin towers and the Pentagon, and attacks in Indonesia, Tunisia, Kenya, Yemen, Somalia, Tanzania and Saudi Arabia? It is therefore arrant nonsense to say that leaving Saddam Hussein's regime of torture in place—a regime that legitimised brutality—would have led to the world being a safer place.

This world is not a safe place. It is a beautiful world, it is often inspirational and it is full of compassionate and caring people, but it will never be a safe world if we turn our backs and refuse to confront difficult situations, leaving people in pain—in prison and without freedom—to die, and all because we do not have the courage to act.

Let us not forget the good work that is going on in Iraq every day. British forces are involved in more than 2,700 reconstruction projects; 80 per cent of Basra now has access to running water; 65 health projects have been completed; and 91 schools have been refurbished. That is in the southern part of the country alone. As Ann Clwyd—who is a person with significant personal credibility in the region and who is our human rights envoy to Iraq—said yesterday in *The Herald*:

"I spoke to the leader of Baghdad city council and asked him what was the difference between now and before the war. He looked at me and said—'If I had met you a year ago, I would have said hello, long live the President and

goodbye. Now I can complain to you about not having enough electricity and about the garbage in the street.'"

She asked the Iraqis about the position of the forces over there, and what did they say? They said, "Stay the course."

Yesterday saw the announcement of an Iraqi Government. That was an historic announcement at the start of a process that will lead to the first democratically elected Government in Iraq for many decades. With the freedom of democracy, people do not walk away from the opportunity to work for peace in any country. We stay the course.

It is a challenge, but what are those who continue to bomb and maim actually fighting? They are fighting against democracy. Let us be clear. Many of the people involved have a violent and criminal history that predates the arrival of the coalition forces. Many are thugs; none is a freedom fighter. They have never had the support of the majority of the Iraqi people. We do not walk away from people who are working to win back democracy in their country. We stay the course. We work for the handover on 30 June, knowing that there will be more violence and more acts of terror from those in Iraq and outside it. We work to confront abuse and persecution.

Those of us who have supported the war have the integrity to accept the consequences even when they are difficult. On the security situation and the appalling abuses in Abu Ghraib, we accept the responsibility to be true to our values, to punish those who abuse power in our name, and to take action against those, whoever they are, who denigrate human life. We accept the consequences. That means acknowledging the abuses, but it also means acknowledging the progress and the courage and humanity of our armed forces.

Those who oppose the war must accept the consequences, too—that Saddam could still be in power. He would be emboldened in his regime of persecution and torture—a regime that used industrial shredders to dispose of those who opposed him. There would be no guaranteed autonomy for the Kurds, no religious freedom for the Shiites and no coming democracy for the people of Iraq.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** Will Mr Kerr define exactly why the United Kingdom went into Iraq? Was it to do with all those people being killed, or was it because of the false prospectus of the weapons of mass destruction? Can we be clear about this and not use all the red herrings that Mr Kerr has introduced so liberally into the debate?

**Mr Kerr:** Referring to mass graves with 300,000 people in them as "red herrings" is abysmal, irresponsible and disgusting. However, to answer

Mr Brown's question, there were a number of reasons for going in. As I said previously, every developed nation in the world thought that there were weapons of mass destruction available. Why were the Kurds preparing, one month before the war, for a chemical attack on their own people? Because they knew what Saddam could do and they knew that he could kill 5,000 people with chemical weapons.

The SNP motion talks about an occupying force. That is wrong and another cheap use of words. The UN defines an occupying force and it recognises the coalition in Iraq as a multinational force, authorised under resolution 1511. I say to Mr Swinney that he should make up his mind. Either he supports the UN or he does not. He cannot pick and choose the bits that suit him for his own narrow political interests.

**Shona Robison (Dundee East) (SNP):** Will the minister take an intervention?

**The Presiding Officer:** He is on his last minute.

**Mr Kerr:** The nationalists have constantly and deliberately misrepresented the coalition. The coalition is not solely Britain and America; it is a coalition of more than 30 countries, including Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, the Netherlands, Australia, Bulgaria, Thailand, Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Japan, Norway, Mongolia, South Korea, Azerbaijan, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, Albania, Georgia, New Zealand, Moldova, Macedonia, Estonia and Kazakhstan—more than 30 countries that are involved in a truly multinational force that is working for democracy and working to rebuild and reconstruct Iraq.

The SNP motion proposes that the coalition forces should be replaced by a force made up of

“those drawn from non-Western, preferably Muslim, countries”.

I do not believe that the UN should practise apartheid. We do not construct alliances on the basis of one religion against another, one colour against another or one race against another. Which Muslims would Mr Swinney have in his proposed force? Would they be Shiites or Sunnis? Would Shiites be deployed in Sunni areas and Sunnis in Shiite areas? Where would that end? Mr Swinney must understand the principles on which the UN was founded. We cannot turn away from those principles and divide the world. The SNP's proposal would mean that the rich, western, powerful countries would pack up and leave the serious logistical and military problems for the less powerful, poorer and developing countries to sort out. There would be no strong, international responsibility.

As Pauline McNeill said, the SNP has chosen to

denigrate the Parliament and, more important, the people of Scotland. The SNP debate is not about serious, life-threatening international terrorism, global security, the complexities that we experience in a difficult world, the preservation of human values or work for peace. It is founded on a desperate need to win votes. How else can SNP members explain the remarkable coincidence of their attention to the issue only when an election is due? They raised the issue in March last year before the Scottish Parliament elections and in June this year before the European elections. It beggars belief that they seem to be prepared to trade again on the suffering and misery of the Iraqi people for their chances at the polls.

We call for the restoration of full sovereignty—that is a shared objective. It is also an objective that we share with the Iraqi people. They are not asking us to leave; they are asking us to stay the course, to build capacity in their country with them, to restore the infrastructure with them, to defend the rule of law with them, to feed, clothe and educate their children with them and to work for peace with them.

Legitimate opposition is a central tenet of democracy, but the nationalist motion represents opportunism, muddled thinking and political inconsistency. Global security, peace and democracy are far too important to be diverted to satisfy narrow, shallow political interest. The Labour Party amendment is founded on human values, integrity and principles. It does not seek to divide; it seeks to unite behind a positive future for Iraq. It recognises the courage and achievements of our armed forces in Iraq and it puts the UN at the front and centre of our determination to build a safer world. It recognises the courage and determination of the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people demand that we stay the course and we will.

I move amendment S2M-1374.5, to leave out from “reaffirms” to end and insert:

“notes that discussions are taking place on a draft resolution on Iraq in the UN Security Council; recognises the importance of international support, particularly that of countries in the region, Iraq's neighbours, and regional organisations, for the people of Iraq in their efforts to achieve security; welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to assist the people of Iraq in achieving the formation of a sovereign interim government of Iraq and the end of the occupation by 30 June 2004; affirms the importance of the principles of the rule of law, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and of democracy, including free and fair elections no later than 31 January 2005; notes the report provided to the Security Council on 16 April 2004 under resolution 1511 (2003) on the efforts and progress made by the multinational force authorised under that resolution; welcomes the willingness of the multinational force to continue efforts to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq in support of the political transition, especially for upcoming elections, and to provide security for the United Nations presence in

Iraq; recognises the importance of the consent of the sovereign government of Iraq for the presence of the multinational force after 30 June and of close co-ordination between the multinational force and that government, and acknowledges that the United Nations should play a leading role in assisting the Iraqi people in particular in the formation of institutions for representative government.”

15:07

**Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con):** When I first heard about the debate, I welcomed it because I believe that we in Scotland should take a view on the international situation. However, we should take not just a narrow view on the situation in Iraq but a view on the wider world. Issues such as poverty and world debt are relevant to what I interpret to be an examination of the international situation. However, the SNP motion presents none of that.

**Brian Adam (Aberdeen North) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Phil Gallie:** I will give way in a minute.

The motion represents an opportunistic effort to induce something into the public mind that can create an excuse for the SNP's pathetic performance at the forthcoming European elections. That is why the SNP lodged the motion and why we are having this debate today, as Pauline McNeill and Andy Kerr said. I regret that very much.

**Brian Adam:** Will Mr Gallie assure me that at the next opportunity for a Conservative party debate, the Conservatives will lodge a motion on the international situation that is just as he has described?

**Phil Gallie:** No. As far as we are concerned, we have representatives at Westminster—as does the SNP—who will debate those issues. We will not exploit the issues, but we will support our colleagues down south who are prepared to address major issues, such as AIDS in Africa. Our colleagues at Westminster have consistently raised concerns about such issues over the years.

Sadly, we had to include in our amendment our concern that foul accusations were being made against our armed services. Very sadly indeed, Mr Swinney came out with such a slur on our armed services. Without a doubt, at any time in any armed force, there is always an individual who might go beyond the norm in the way that they act. Our armed forces are more than disciplined—they are well controlled. They have carried out peaceful involvements in countries such as Kosovo, Bosnia and Afghanistan in a way that has enhanced their reputation and not cast a slur on it, as Mr Swinney did today.

**Tommy Sheridan:** Given that 40 unlawful killings are now being investigated, does the

member accept that that does not shine a good light on the British Army?

**Phil Gallie:** We believe that people are guilty once they have been proved guilty; what we are talking about are challenges on individuals. I have confidence in our armed forces and the justice system. They will ensure that if any member of our armed forces has carried out such an act, they will be punished for it. If any of the charges are upheld, I would expect the punishment to be severe because the good name of our armed forces will have been brought into question.

I go along with much of what Andy Kerr said. However, he seems not to acknowledge that members of the Scottish Parliament were deceived by the words that came out of Westminster in the past. There can be no doubt that some of the statements that led up to the situation in Iraq were not based on fact. That causes me some anxiety, as I trusted that when a British Prime Minister made statements in the House of Commons he had the information to back them up.

I have to say to Andy Kerr that I believe that Parliament was misled on the issue and that it voted to go to war in Iraq on the wrong basis. However, I believe strongly that it was right that we went to the assistance of the people of Iraq when we did. I do not accept that the situation has been made worse; had we not gone in and had we left Saddam Hussein in position, we would have set up an icon for terrorists to build around. It was right that we took those actions, but it was wrong that Parliament was presented with the wrong reasons for doing so.

**Shona Robison:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Phil Gallie:** I am sorry, but I am giving way to Shona Robison.

**Shona Robison:** Given the member's comments about the need to remove Saddam Hussein, could he explain why the Conservative Governments under Thatcher and Major sold weapons to Saddam Hussein? Does he not feel hypocritical to stand up in the chamber and condemn Saddam Hussein when his own party sold weapons to the man?

**Phil Gallie:** If we looked back at the history of weapon sales, we would find that we sold weapons at times—as did other nations—to people of other nations who have changed their stance. It was not wrong; it was right at the time. Later, however, it perhaps proved to be wrong and Shona Robison should acknowledge that we then placed a ban on the sale of weapons to Iraq.

In the present, I am concerned about the way in

which the Blair Government is prepared to commit our armed forces time and again even though just a few weeks ago all of us were worried that steps would be taken to reduce our Scottish regiments. There is concern about the cuts in the air force and the navy—I am thinking of concerns about the cutbacks in the Sea Harrier and the Eurofighter. There are now proposals to cut back our fleet. I believe that those actions are not consistent with a Government that is prepared constantly to commit our forces as it has done.

**Mr Jim Wallace (Orkney) (LD):** Will Mr Gallie confirm that his party's Treasury spokesman, Oliver Letwin, said in a speech on 16 February that the Conservatives

"would increase spending on health and education and freeze the rest."

How does a freeze on defence spending tally with the kind of comments that the member has just made?

**Phil Gallie:** Oliver Letwin made it quite clear that defence and police expenditure would not be cut, but that expenditure would be looked at. If a Conservative Government placed our armed forces in a conflict situation, the one thing that it would not do—it has never done so—is send them in under-resourced in any way. We would handle defence and all such issues in the responsible way that we have done in the past.

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** Will the member give way?

**Phil Gallie:** No, not to Mike Rumbles.

In talking about the international situation, it is worth while reflecting on the appearance of the Dalai Lama in the chamber today. It brought to mind another situation that we have to face up to, to which Shona Robison referred earlier. China was a major aggressor in the past, but it is going to have to be welcomed into the universal political world in future. However, we must recognise that in order for China to be accepted into that international scene there must be change there. The change must be two way. We have to examine the situation in Tibet and encourage change.

There are other issues, such as situations in Africa, South America and across the globe. The UK played a proud part in the past and has a prouder part to play in the future.

I move amendment S2M-1374.2, to leave out from the first "and" to end and insert:

“; recognises the importance of maintaining an influential Scottish voice in the UN Security Council through the permanent position allocated to the United Kingdom; notes the serious security situation in Iraq and pays tribute to the courageous, professional and effective manner in which British armed forces are responding to it; condemns

malicious attempts in certain quarters to damage the reputation of our armed forces in Iraq by false accusations; supports future requests from British commanders on the ground for further equipment or manpower to enable them to fulfil their task; looks forward to a genuine transfer of power to a representative Iraqi Interim Government on 30 June 2004 to which, as the civil power, the United Kingdom can continue to give aid as required, and reaffirms the goal of helping to create a stable, democratic and prosperous Iraq which can become a beneficial influence within the region as a whole.”

15:16

**Mr Jim Wallace (Orkney) (LD):** Before Britain went into the conflict in Iraq last year, the Liberal Democrats made their position very clear: we indicated that we deplored the vile, tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein, who was a brutal dictator, and we asserted the importance of United Nations action to deal with the problem that was then identified as Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. We made it clear that war should be the last resort, and even then only with the backing of the United Nations.

As my colleague Sir Menzies Campbell said:

“we went to war ... on a threat and a promise. The threat was that of weapons of mass destruction, and the promise was that of progress in the middle east peace process. But neither threat nor promise has been fulfilled.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 17 May 2004; Vol 421, c 677.]

Let us recall that at that time the Prime Minister assured this country—indeed, assured the world—that every effort would be made to seek a more peaceful solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and he assured us that all the evidence suggested that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

We should not lose sight of the fact that it was very much on the argument of weapons of mass destruction that the Prime Minister argued the case for going to war. It is dangerous to enunciate the principle that, however reprehensibly immoral and vile a regime may be, we can take it out without the sanction of the United Nations.

Fifteen months later, the middle east situation has undoubtedly deteriorated. The vicious cycle of terror attack and retaliation has driven Israel and the Palestinians even further apart and, despite the promises of progress, a negotiated settlement seems further away than ever.

Fifteen months later, the weapons of mass destruction have never been found. Today we are a long way from finding the key evidence to support the case for military action that the Prime Minister made in March last year.

**Phil Gallie:** Jim Wallace says that the situation has got worse but, as Andy Kerr pointed out, events in Tunisia, Indonesia and Kenya occurred before the invasion of Iraq. How can he honestly

state that the situation has got worse?

**Mr Wallace:** My comment was about the middle east. Given what has happened there, with the vicious cycle of terrorist attack and counter-attack, and given what happened in Saudi Arabia, I believe that we are further away from a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians than we were 15 months ago.

Fifteen months ago, my party argued that the Security Council should judge how much time UN weapons inspectors needed, but the United States and the United Kingdom Governments felt that they could not wait for the UN. Instead, they decided to invade Iraq without further UN authority, in effect placing themselves on the periphery of the international community. There is a certain irony that, 15 months after the United States and the United Kingdom sidestepped the United Nations, the handover date of 30 June now depends largely on the efforts of Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations and the new interim Administration. We should welcome yesterday's news that Iraq's new interim Administration has been appointed on the recommendation of Mr Brahimi.

That does not mean that we should underestimate the challenges ahead. A brutal tyrant has lost power, but those who overthrew him must not risk losing their moral authority, not least as a result of the regime established by the US in Guantanamo bay and the shameful and degrading treatment of detainees. Human rights abuses—no doubt by a tiny minority of US soldiers—have only added to the tension and unrest that is already prevalent in Iraq. Let us be clear that as much as human rights abuses are completely unacceptable, so too are violent terrorist attacks—both must be condemned. As John Swinney said, there must be no hiding place for the terrorists.

Unlike the SSP, I do not believe that we can just cut and run. We have a duty to remain and assist the people of Iraq to build a democratic future. Nor do I share the perhaps facile optimism of the SNP that we can suddenly create a Muslim force. It is not clear precisely what the SNP policy is. The motion states that the force would be "preferably" Muslim. On 25 May, the SNP said:

"The Bush/Blair policy has made these forces part of the problem, which is why they should be replaced by troops from Islamic nations".

As recently as yesterday, the party talked about a "phased replacement of US and UK troops by Muslim forces".

Is the force to be phased in and is it to be preferably Muslim or wholly Muslim? The policy has not been thought out.

Our responsibility is clear, but our role is not limitless. More troops would not necessarily help the situation. The Liberal Democrats believe that no additional troops should be sent to Iraq unless certain conditions are met, the most important of which is that additional troops should be deployed only when commanders on the ground have requested them to safeguard our existing forces or to fulfil international obligations to the people of Iraq and to the UN.

**Mr Swinney:** Mr Wallace has been swift to criticise the SNP proposals. If I understand his amendment correctly, he is against the deployment of further troops unless that is done for British security in Iraq. Does he believe that that proposal will be enough to solve the problem in Iraq or does he have other proposals to offer, as we have done, to resolve the issue?

**Mr Wallace:** I will certainly talk more about what I see to be the way forward. That includes working under a new Security Council resolution. I have no objection to the deployment of troops from Muslim countries, but I do not think that the policy of putting together a Muslim force stacks up, not least because of the practical issues that Andy Kerr and the Secretary-General of the United Nations have raised.

For the moment, there is no alternative to the occupation of Iraq. We were against sending the troops in the first place, but a withdrawal would cause chaos. Iraq would not be made safer for its citizens; electricity and water supplies would not be maintained; aid agencies' operations would be impeded; and, most important, UN efforts to achieve a smooth transition to Iraqi rule would have little chance of success. Those who are opposed to the creation of a stable state would exploit the vacuum that the withdrawal of troops would create. Sending more troops is not the answer, but neither is immediate withdrawal. British troops on the ground are making an important contribution by helping to rebuild vital infrastructure. We salute their bravery and professionalism in difficult and dangerous circumstances.

The Liberal Democrats believe that three principles are essential if we are to make progress. First, all our effort should be directed to supporting the United Nations in establishing the provisional Government. Second, once the provisional Government has been established, our effort should be directed to supporting the United Nations in its preparations for the elections. Third, as soon as an Iraqi Government has been democratically elected under UN supervision, United Kingdom troops should begin a phased withdrawal. We need a new UN resolution, but satisfying all members of the Security Council is not enough. The resolution must convey enough



authority to the provisional Government to persuade the people of Iraq that the transfer of sovereignty is real, substantial and permanent. Anything less will simply encourage the existing suspicions that the object of the coalition remains occupation, not liberation.

John Swinney has already given a quote from John F Kennedy, which I used in a debate in March of last year. It is worth repeating that quote. John F Kennedy said:

"To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support".

With Iraq in turmoil, the Liberal Democrats believe that the United Nations is our last best hope. The United States and the United Kingdom bypassed the United Nations in starting the war, but they must now embrace the UN to win the peace and create the stable and democratic Iraq that we all want to achieve and which, above all, the Iraqi people deserve.

I move amendment S2M-1374.4, to leave out from "reaffirms" to end and insert:

"notes the motion passed by the Parliament on 13 March 2003; reaffirms its support for the United Nations and its belief in the primacy of international law; regrets that Her Majesty's Government saw fit to take this country into the Iraq War without United Nations sanction or credible evidence of a significant threat to the safety of the United Kingdom or of the world community; believes that as a consequence the world is now a more dangerous place; notes with concern the deteriorating security situation in Iraq and the Middle East; believes that progress in Iraq is only possible if the role of the United Nations is expanded and enhanced and the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqis on 30 June 2004 is real and visible; recalls that when the House of Commons endorsed military action against Saddam Hussein it did so on an understanding that progress on the road map for a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians would be a priority for Her Majesty's Government; expresses its disappointment that recent events have made the achievement of a negotiated two-state solution more difficult and less likely; recognises the bravery and professionalism of British armed forces serving in Iraq in difficult and dangerous circumstances; calls upon Her Majesty's Government not to commit any further troops unless requested by United Kingdom commanders in Iraq for the purposes of securing the safety of British forces and the fulfilling of Britain's international obligations towards the people of Iraq and to the United Nations, and further declares that any such troops should remain under United Kingdom operational command and within the area currently under United Kingdom control."

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** I call Tommy Sheridan to speak to amendment S2M-1374.3. You have six minutes.

15:25

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP):** I was told that I had seven minutes, but maybe there was a change in the chair.

Last month, the newly elected socialist Government of Spain restored some faith in democratic politics when it honoured the election pledge that delivered it a shock victory on the back of a huge electoral turnout at Spain's general election. Spain withdrew its troops from Iraq, stating that it wanted nothing to do with what it called an "illegal and immoral war". Today, the Scottish Socialist Party amendment calls on the Parliament to support the same action, and to withdraw all British troops from the illegally occupied Iraq. The call for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq is not just an SSP call; it reflects the actions of one of Europe's most powerful nations, which realised that it was wrong originally to have supported the invasion of Iraq.

In November last year, the First Minister, speaking in a debate on the war in Iraq, dutifully obeyed his master in Westminster by supporting the illegal invasion of Iraq because

"The people of Iraq now have a chance to express their opinions."—[*Official Report*, 20 November 2003; c 3470.]

Last month, in a pro-US forum, the people of Iraq did just that. In an extensive Gallup poll, reported on CNN and in *USA Today*, 64 per cent of the people of Iraq said that coalition actions have turned out worse than they had hoped for and 57 per cent of Iraqis said that they wanted all coalition troops to be withdrawn immediately. I say to those who tell us that we should stay the course that we should perhaps listen to what the people of Iraq are telling us. They want us out of their country. In the same poll, 70 per cent of Iraqis said that they view the troops not as liberators but as an occupation force.

**Phil Gallie:** Will Tommy Sheridan tell me what the result of polls before the fall of Saddam Hussein suggested?

**Tommy Sheridan:** That is the point that I am making. The fact that there was no democracy or freedom in Iraq before the invasion has been used as a justification for the invasion. Apparently the invasion was justified because Iraqis now have opinions. The problem is that we are just ignoring their opinions. Seventy per cent view the troops as an occupation force; those are not cheap words, as Mr Kerr would have us believe, but the opinion of the Iraqi people, who are suffering from that occupation. The invasion of Iraq was based on a tangled web of lies, deceit and distortion that was spun by the likes of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and others in the US of A, and, like an obedient parrot, repeated by Mr Blair in Britain.

Bush and Blair stand condemned as liars in relation to the war on Iraq, because they deliberately misled the people of this country and attempted to mislead the people of the world. A total of 399 days after the so-called victory in the

war in Iraq, no weapons of mass destruction have been found. There was no 45-minute threat to British interests. Before the invasion of Iraq, there was no link with al-Qa'ida, but al-Qa'ida cells are certainly active in Iraq now.

**Robert Brown:** Two thirds of the way through Tommy Sheridan's speech, we know about the origins of the war and so on, but what do we do with it now? In the absence of a proper civil authority in Iraq, what would be the result of immediate withdrawal of coalition forces without there being some structure in their place?

**Tommy Sheridan:** It is important that we explain fully the basis of this illegal invasion to explain that the current occupation is an illegal occupation. We have no right to be there; we should withdraw and the Iraqi people should make their own country in the way that they want. We are an illegal occupying force. I do not want another drop of either Iraqi blood or British troops' blood to be spilled on the basis of the tangled web of lies and deceit that we have heard. That is why we want the troops to be withdrawn.

The argument that has been used is that we did not know whether there were weapons of mass destruction and we had to go in first before we found out. Mr Kerr refused to take an intervention, which was on whether he agrees that Hans Blix and his weapons inspectors should have been withdrawn from Iraq, given that they were peacefully verifying that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, peacefully verifying that he posed no threat to British interests and peacefully verifying that he posed no threat to his immediate neighbours. Hans Blix and his team were ordered out not by the dictator Saddam Hussein, but by George Bush, because they were exposing the tangled web of lies, the fear that was being created and the hysteria that was whipped up that we must go into Iraq and must kill more than 20,000 men and women.

**Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab):** Will the member give way?

**Tommy Sheridan:** No, thank you.

Some 4,000 Iraqi children have been murdered. More than 10 times the number who were massacred in the 11 September atrocity have been massacred in an act of revenge that has made our world a much less safe place in which to live.

Our party believes in the sovereignty of the Scottish people, which is why we believe in the sovereignty of the Iraqi people as well. We have no place to be in Iraq and we should withdraw immediately. The SSP calls unequivocally for the immediate withdrawal of our troops. We should do what the Spanish Government has had the courage to do in sticking by its electoral pledge

and get out of this immoral and illegal morass that the American Government has created in its pursuit of oil and world domination. Let us cut ourselves from the apron strings of the US of A and let us do it now.

I move amendment S2M-1374.3, to leave out from "reaffirms" to end and insert:

"believes that all British troops should be withdrawn from Iraq immediately; considers that the decision to invade Iraq was based on lies, deceit and distortion and that President George W Bush and Tony Blair are guilty of wilful deception in relation to weapons of mass destruction, Iraqi links to the September 11 atrocity and Iraq posing an imminent "45-minute" threat to British interests; further considers that the invasion of Iraq was illegal under international law and the continued presence of coalition troops represents an illegal occupation; believes that the billions of pounds committed to waging war in Iraq should be diverted to agencies like the Red Cross, Red Crescent, Médecins Sans Frontières and others to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq's infrastructure with the consent of the Iraqi people and that peace across the Middle East will be only secured on the basis of a free and viable Palestine requiring the withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian territory; further believes that Scotland's name should be synonymous with peaceful resolution of the world's problems and conflicts, and extends the hand of peace and friendship internationally."

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We now move to the open debate. Speeches will have to be of five minutes as a considerable number of members wish to speak.

15:33

**Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP):** To secure peace in Iraq and allow it to move towards democracy, there must be coalition disengagement, both political and military. I have never been an advocate of the all-troops-out-now position. To create a security vacuum in Iraq before stable political institutions have been established, which have democratic legitimacy and the consent of the Iraqi people, and before the Iraqis have the means to defend their nascent democracy against attack would be a recipe for chaos and civil war.

However, I also believe that any troops who stay in Iraq must have the support of the Iraqi people and must be there to serve Iraqi interests, not the interests of those whose motives for invasion remain suspect. For me, and for reasons to which I will return, that means that they must not be drawn predominantly from US or UK forces and that they should not be under US command.

Let us remember that amidst all the talk of a new United Nations Security Council resolution and the transfer of sovereignty to the new Iraqi Government, there is no intention on the part of either Bush or Blair to remove coalition forces from United States command. In my view, that makes continuing unrest in Iraq more likely, not less likely. Whether we like it or not, Iraqis see UK and

US forces as an army of occupation. To say that is not to criticise our soliders; it is simply a statement of reality. It is the direct consequence of Blair and Bush waging war illegally on the basis of lies; going to war in pursuit of weapons of mass destruction that do not exist; claiming that the war in Iraq would advance the war on global terror when the reality is that it has accelerated the flow of recruits to al-Qa'ida; and using the defence of human rights as an ex post facto justification for war, while abusing human rights in Guantanamo bay and Abu Ghraib.

Arguably, the unrest is above all else a consequence of promising progress for Palestine while backing Israel to the hilt as it continues to kill innocent civilians and to use American-supplied Caterpillars to bulldoze people out of their homes in an attempt to impose a settlement that will deprive Palestinians of more of their own land. For all those reasons and more, the coalition in Iraq lacks credibility in the eyes of the international community and is seen as the enemy by the Iraqi people.

For as long as coalition forces remain dominant in Iraq and remain under US command, they will be an incitement to rebellion. The legitimate anger of ordinary Iraqis will provide cover for those whose motives are to undermine and frustrate the democratic process. Such people will view attacks on coalition troops as the way to win popular support.

**Robert Brown:** I do not disagree with what Nicola Sturgeon has said, but will she explain what command structure would exist under the SNP's proposal and from where troops would come in significant enough numbers to replace US and UK forces within a reasonably straightforward period?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Many Muslim countries have sizeable forces that have been engaged in peacekeeping tasks around the world on many occasions. Given the conditions that I have described and to which Robert Brown alluded, there is a need for a genuinely multinational force that is drawn, as far as possible, from countries that are culturally, politically and religiously more in tune with the Iraqi people. Until such time as the Iraqi Government can assume full control, such a multinational force under the command of the United Nations rather than the United States would be the best way of guaranteeing security.

**Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD):** Will the member give way?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Sorry, I do not have time.

Coalition disengagement from Iraq must be political as well as military. The debate about the extent of sovereignty to be transferred is important, but we must be careful not to let debates about sovereignty cloud another issue.

Sovereignty will be meaningful only if the interim Government has the support and credibility to exercise it. The Iraqi Government will not be legitimate in the eyes of the Iraqi people if it is composed of American placemen. In those circumstances, the Iraqi people will simply look elsewhere for political leadership.

America's blatant attempt to manipulate the make-up of the new Government was typical, but it was probably more successful than it wants us to think. We can only guess whether yesterday's spat between the US and the Governing Council over the appointment of the new Iraqi President was real or a cynical public relations stunt, but the unavoidable truth is that, as long as the US remains so heavily engaged in Iraq, the suspicion, if not the reality, will be that the US is pulling the strings. That means that the chances of the new Government leading the country to free elections in January—which is absolutely essential—will be diminished.

This is a moment of truth for Bush and his sidekick, Blair. If they believe in giving Iraqis genuine power, rather than in controlling the country by proxy for their own strategic and economic ends, they must recognise that they are currently the main stumbling block on the path to democracy. Bush and Blair should get out and allow the United Nations to take their place.

15:38

**Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):** Across the country and across the Parliament, people have genuinely held views and conflicting viewpoints on how we have arrived at the current situation. This afternoon, we have heard a great deal of analysis about how we got here, but we are all agreed on the need to win the peace.

I want to spend a few moments talking about how we achieve a peace that is worth working for. We should perhaps put politics aside and concentrate on how to do that. Many will be familiar with the saying that peace is not just the absence of war; it is about promoting an agenda of fairness, freedom, justice and equality. That is what the Security Council resolution seeks to do.

**Phil Gallie:** Will Irene Oldfather join me in taking the opportunity to mark our great admiration for those who took part in the D-day landings in the cause of peace? Given that today's debate is on the international situation, does she agree that we would have had no democracy or debate today if those landings had not taken place?

**Irene Oldfather:** I am happy to support Mr Gallie in that viewpoint. Many of us recognise the contributions that our fathers and grandfathers made, through the D-day landings, to the peace that we have in Europe today.

The values and principles that I spoke about should relate not only to Iraq but to the middle east. I am aware that my colleague John Home Robertson visited Palestine recently, and he will be able to report on the need to support the Palestinian people and find solutions to the problems that they face.

**Carolyn Leckie (Central Scotland) (SSP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Irene Oldfather:** Not at the moment.

If we are committed to peace, we must also strive for a better balance in other difficult situations in the world.

As politicians, we have a duty to respond to the crisis in a measured and responsible way that is free from political opportunism. That will help to bring about peace and will restore the confidence of ordinary Iraqis in themselves and in their electoral process. Andy Kerr spoke about the fear of politicians to speak up and say anything other than, "Hail to Saddam," a year and a half ago. The regime was brutal and torture was a way of life. We must recognise that part of our role is to restore the Iraqi people's confidence to allow them to speak their minds and to have a Government that is directly elected by the people.

In the meantime, there are a number of constructive things that we can do. We can continue to support the humanitarian effort to make life better for ordinary Iraqis. It is important to praise the efforts of those who have been involved in the past and those who have lost their lives as a result of putting humanitarian aid before themselves. In today's debate, it is also important to mention the work of the Red Cross and others who have contributed to trying to find resolutions to the humanitarian crisis.

We also need to encourage those involved to work with the interim Government and the newly appointed Prime Minister. I was disappointed to hear Nicola Sturgeon's words; it is offensive to suggest that there was some kind of orchestrated PR campaign and that the new Iraqi President, directly elected and appointed by Iraqis, is just a puppet of the US. That comment is quite disgraceful. We need to work to ensure the successful implementation of the election to create a transitional Government in January and a permanent Government in December 2005. That timetable is important to the Iraqi people and we must be seen to adhere to it and we must work to ensure that it is put in place.

I conclude by paying tribute to the objectives that the Dutch presidency of the European Union has outlined for the next six months. It has indicated its frustration with the constant bickering in Europe, which has not been productive, and has identified the failure of EU members to unite

around common causes in relation to Iraq. I hope that the UK Government will work with the Dutch presidency of the European Union in future deliberations to support the balanced world order that the European Union could bring.

The Labour amendment seeks to emphasise the importance of human values. It seeks to unite us, not to divide us, and it acknowledges the courage and determination of the Iraqi people. I support the amendment.

15:43

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** Before the debate, a number of contributions were made under the heading of points of order. It was quite clear that a number of members are unhappy about the subject matter that is being debated, and I have to say that I have a great deal of sympathy with the points that were made. That said, and given that the SNP might to its advantage have decided to debate something over which the Parliament has a scintilla of control, it cannot be denied that there is considerable public disquiet about the international situation in general and the situation in Iraq in particular.

There is also considerable public cynicism about the basis on which the coalition went to war. The majority of the Westminster Parliament voted to do so on the basis of the Prime Minister's advice that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and presented a clear and present danger to this country and our interests. The events of the past 12 months, the Hutton inquiry and, in particular, the failure to find any such weapons have become a matter of the greatest concern and have raised many questions about whether those who voted to undertake the exercise did so on the basis of the correct information.

Nevertheless, the agenda has moved on and we must cope with the realities of the situation, which are extremely difficult. As Mr Gallie said, the security situation in Iraq is indisputably serious. However, not even opponents of the action can claim that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was a Shangri-la, because it manifestly was not. Those who criticise—rightly—the behaviour of some individuals in Abu Ghraib jail might with advantage consider what happened in that jail before the liberation of Iraq. People were slaughtered there in their thousands and torture and oppression of the Iraqi people were manifest in that institution.

**Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (Ind):** With regret, I ask the member to agree that we should not accept that Saddam Hussein's standards provide any guidance for our troops.

**Bill Aitken:** I agree absolutely. As I have said, we must be better than people who have behaved like barbarians. One feature that emerges time

and again is the fact that our armed forces are better than that. That has been demonstrated. When Mr Swinney referred somewhat disparagingly to some sections of our armed forces, Mr Gallie was right to underline the presumption of innocence.

We should be proud of our armed forces' performance in the past 12 months. The Scottish contingent has made a formidable contribution to the reinstatement of Iraq as a modern and forward-looking democracy. The armed forces are entitled to our fullest support, but I am concerned that Treasury savings are in danger of being made at the expense of soldiers' lives. The journal "Defence Analysis" says that the Treasury has withheld at least £200 million and that Gordon Brown refuses to fund up to £500 million of the cost of the Iraq war. If our armed forces are being deprived of the necessary equipment or supplies to ensure their safety, that is a serious matter.

As I have said, nobody is happy about the situation, but to withdraw and leave a job half done is not an option. It is essential to place Iraq in a position from which it can be a viable, progressive and democratic country. As Mr Gallie's amendment says, it should

"become a beneficial influence within the region as a whole."

That must be our goal. There is no point in pulling out at this stage. We must see the task through. It is incumbent on all members of the Parliament and all members in another place to ensure that our armed forces are given every possible support in fulfilling that task.

15:48

**Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):**

It is right that we should debate Iraq today, because little of what has happened since we last debated the issue has been good for the people of Iraq or happy for Britain and our involvement there.

The reason for war—that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction—has not been and is not likely to be proved. The occupation of Iraq is achieving the opposite of what it set out to do—it has intensified the threat of terrorism and made the war against terrorism more difficult to prosecute, let alone win.

As Mr Swinney said, the highly respected International Institute for Strategic Studies said last week that the Iraq war had been a recruiting agent for terrorism, had helped to restore an al-Qa'ida that had been dispersed by the invasion of Afghanistan and had made a repeat of an atrocity on the scale of 9/11 more likely.

This misguided war has further serious

consequences, which Jim Wallace outlined. It will make it far more difficult to produce peace and stability in the middle east and not least between Israel and Palestine. It may also—understandably—lead the United States to retreat into one of its periodic bouts of isolationism. After the American Administration's fingers have been so comprehensively burned, future Administrations may be less willing to face up to a genuine threat from another country.

Although the invasion of Iraq was mistaken, that mistake should not be compounded by the withdrawal of the coalition's forces in the immediate or near future. There can be no withdrawal without Iraq spiralling into anarchy or probable civil war, but we require a further Security Council resolution to bring coalition forces under UN auspices, so that they have to report regularly to and be subject to the authority of the Security Council.

That is how we should proceed militarily, but how should we proceed politically? The 30 June deadline for initiating the transfer of sovereignty back to the Iraqi people looms. Then there will be a transitional Government, but that is only the beginning. A new constitution must be drawn up, an electoral commission set up and voter registration begun. Iraq must be enabled to move to free and fair elections as soon as the security of the ballot can be guaranteed. I agree with my colleague Sir Menzies Campbell, who said recently in the House of Commons that our relationship with the United States should be a partnership of influence, not so subordinate that we appear to be subservient.

If senior Republican senators, such as Senator Richard Lugar—chairman of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—and Senators John McCain and Pete Domenici, can be openly critical of the White House, and if General Zinni, the former American commander in the middle east and the State Department's representative there, can attack the Bush Administration in the most scathing terms, why can our own Prime Minister not speak out? Why can he not speak out passionately against the denial of civil and human rights to the detainees at Guantanamo bay, against the inhumane and degrading treatment of those held at Abu Ghraib jail and against the heavy-handed behaviour of the American armed forces at Fallujah and elsewhere? Sadly, the Prime Minister has shown a stubborn inability to admit that he might be wrong: wrong about weapons of mass destruction; wrong about Iraq being a source of international terrorism; and wrong about the idea that Iraqis would welcome American and British troops as liberators.

If he were to show some humility and admit that he might just be wrong, Mr Blair would win some

respect; if not, history will be his judge and the verdict will not be a favourable one.

15:52

**Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP):** The SNP motion clearly lays out our belief both in the primacy of international law and that the war in Iraq is illegal. That is the position that we held when we sponsored the debates in January and March 2003 and it is the position that we hold now. I believe that that was and is the position of most people in this country. That raises questions about the state of democracy in the UK. Many Labour MPs—and Andy Kerr this afternoon—try to justify the decision to go to war last year on the basis that, for the first time ever, a decision to go to war was taken by the Parliament at Westminster and not just by royal prerogative. I contend that the decision to remove Saddam Hussein by force was taken long before then: it was taken by George Bush, who was supported by Tony Blair. The decision was justified by those two men—and by others—through the use of scaremongering, coercion, manipulation of information and deception.

As quoted in the *The Times* on 1 May 2003, US General Wesley Clark admitted that the fight was never just about weapons of mass destruction—whatever the rhetoric. Rather, the war was about the inauguration of a new US strategy for the region. It was about the politics of empire under the guise of the US's view of democracy and freedom—whose freedom is the question that we are now considering. In the UK, before all the backtracking and rewriting of history began, the justification for invading Iraq was the capacity of its weapons of mass destruction. We now know that we were subjected to a lie. What we had was a pre-emptive war—

**Mr Kerr:** On the clarity of the SNP's position, would Linda Fabiani care to comment on Campbell Martin's threat to publish a dossier of secret SNP Cabinet discussions that shows unequivocally that Mr Swinney was swithering—I believe that “wobbling” was the word used—on the issue? Will she comment also comment on the two apparent non-denials, which did not say that Mr Swinney was not wobbling but called Mr Martin's threat a gross abuse of confidence and an internal party matter. Was Mr Swinney wobbling?

**Linda Fabiani:** I say that Campbell Martin is not in the SNP and I suspect that he suffers from a very bad memory.

What we had was a pre-emptive war based on dodgy intelligence and generated by Downing Street.

It is now seen quite clearly that the people of Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world seriously

mistrust the coalition forces, which is perfectly understandable. No matter how well intentioned the majority of the troops are—that is not in question—the fact is that, quite apart from the documented human tragedies that are unfolding daily, the armies are from the same countries that were subjecting Iraq to long-term bombing campaigns prior to the full-scale invasion. Those armies are also from the same countries that imposed sanctions back in 1990, which ensured that Iraq had one of the highest infant mortality rates on the planet and that one quarter of all Iraqi children were underweight, while one fifth were malnourished.

The Iraqi people who lived in the no-fly zone suffered years of death and maiming by the USA and the UK after the first Iraqi war. That action was against UN resolution 688, the forerunner of resolution 1441, which was also interpreted illegally by those whose agenda was already set. The Iraqi people feel as if they have been at war for years and years, not just since 2003.

Whatever one feels about the rights or wrongs of the sanctions that were imposed or the rights and wrongs of having gone to war and removing Saddam Hussein by force, there are facts that cannot be denied. It is a fact that the world is now a more dangerous place. It is a fact that poll after poll in this country show that the majority disagrees with the war. It is a fact that thousands of Iraqis have died and that soldiers in all the forces are dying. It is also a fact that Iraqis perceive the US and UK armed forces to be an occupying force.

Encompassing all those facts is another: the current situation cannot continue and is untenable. The promotion of future stability in Iraq must be of prime importance, along with the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people. That transfer will be complete when there is a democratically elected Government, but the interim Government, which will have sovereignty over internal security issues, should be able to direct a UN-commanded force. The forces on the ground must be brought under UN command and must not remain under the command of countries that Iraqis view as invaders. Because it was committed to a war without a UN mandate, our military does not have the legitimacy that it needs to win the peace and, sadly, the US military has lost all legitimacy. Bringing the current forces under UN command would be a start, followed by their phased withdrawal and replacement by forces that are not seen as invaders and colonisers.

Although the authority of the United Nations has been undermined by this war, it is the agency that should have international legitimacy. It is, after all, no better than the sum of its parts. We have to send out the message that the basic principles of

the UN—the ones upon which it was formed—and its founding charter are still at the heart of our beliefs. We must affirm our support for the UN and for Iraq.

15:58

**Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab):** In the mid-1980s, I was a member of the Scottish Trades Union Congress youth committee and was, through my participation in that body, able to meet young people from a cross-section of Scotland and from several overseas youth organisations. I recall attending the world festival of youth and students in Moscow and having the opportunity to discuss issues, formally and informally, with groups of young people from apartheid South Africa, Chile and other countries under oppressive regimes and dictatorships.

I especially recall an encounter with four Iraqi students who had settled in Scotland. I knew little of their country and even less of the system that they were evidently relieved to have escaped. At the end of our discussion, I was left with two abiding memories. One was of bewilderment, not only that such a barbaric Government could be allowed to get away with systematic brutality, but that it clearly had support from the west. The other memory that I have is of the heartfelt pleas of those students and their insistence that if Britain and other western countries did not desist from supporting Saddam Hussein, the people of Iraq were destined to suffer even greater terror at his hands. Soon after that encounter, we learned of the massacre at Halabjah. My anger at the complicity of my country's then Government in turning a blind eye to that barbarism remains as strong today as it was then.

As time marched on, I attended more and more events at which Saddam was condemned and action called for to deal with his tyrannical regime, but still the west did nothing until Saddam threatened the oil supplies by invading Kuwait. Only then was action taken. Alas, that action was only about oil. As history tells us, we were still not interested enough in the people of Iraq to bring down the Baathist regime. The truth was—and I know that this flies in the face of the clichés about the war being for Iraqi oil—that we had no oil interest in Iraq and had no need therefore to cross into Iraq. Saddam was left in place and the west got on with ignoring the plight of the Iraqi people. UN resolution after UN resolution was passed and ignored and Iraqi after Iraqi died because, collectively, the UN did not care enough to do anything. Now we have done something and I believe that we did the right thing—better late than never.

I do not particularly care that we did not find

weapons of mass destruction. We know that Saddam Hussein had them because he had used them previously and we knew that he would be capable of using them again. The only reason why he cannot do so now is not because he does not have them but because we now have him. I am confident that the four students that I met 20 years ago are glad about that. I am not so confident that they will be proud of this Parliament today as it discusses this tawdry piece of political opportunism.

**Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green):** If I follow the line of Mr McMahon's argument correctly, he is saying that going into Iraq was justified because of Saddam Hussein's evil regime. If that is the case, why did our Prime Minister not put that argument before us and allow us to express our views and make a decision based on it rather than on the clearly made-up reason that was presented to the nation time after time?

**Michael McMahon:** I heard that argument, even if Robin Harper did not.

This debate is not about principle, it is not about upholding international law and it is not about exposing deceit. It is about political point scoring, naked opportunism and blatant hypocrisy.

As a supporter of the Iraqi campaign, I am more than happy to face up to the difficult challenges now facing the Government. There were and are consequences of war. Equally, however, there and were and are consequences of not taking action. Will the SNP face up to that and tell us why it would have left the Iraqi people to suffer at Saddam Hussein's hands? The SNP should not tell us that all we needed was another UN resolution.

As for the SNP's position today, we can look to Rob Gibson who, in an SNP press release dated 28 February this year, said:

"The Blair Regime must be indicted for war crimes and the writ of British rule removed from our way of life."

Such extreme language leaves me in no doubt that the SNP's motion about removing an army of occupation is more to do with anti-British sentiment than anything else and that, as ever, it is using the prevailing situation in post-Saddam Iraq to cover up its own internal strife and prepare for next week's election.

No amount of crocodile tears for the plight of the Iraqi people will wash away the fact that the SNP is more interested in attacking Britain than it is in finding a way to help Iraq. If it believes that the answer is to withdraw, it has questions to answer about that. How could a Muslim-based UN force help and where would it be drawn from? What about Turkey or Iran? Would the Kurds and marsh Arabs want them on their soil? What about Saudi

Arabia? If al-Qa'ida can target that country for its western links just now, just think what it could do if Saudi troops were in Iraq.

I believe that my Government was right to do what it did. I trust it to resolve the current problems. There will be differences across the chamber on this matter this afternoon, and they will be legitimate ones. We will not hide from our responsibility but I ask the SNP to take some responsibility for once and accept the consequences of the opportunism that it is exhibiting this afternoon.

16:03

**Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I will start by addressing the question of why we should be having this debate right before an election. It is the point that is most often raised on the doorsteps and, quite frankly, I think that, in the run-up to an election, politicians have a particular duty to discuss major issues rather than avoid them.

Mr Kerr resorted to some semantics in his speech. He said that there was no occupation because the situation in Iraq is not in accordance with the UN definition of an occupation and that it is not a United States/United Kingdom coalition because there are relatively small contingents from umpteen countries—even though some of those contingents amount to only dozens of people. However, the point is that, to the Iraqi on the ground, it feels like a US occupation and looks like a US occupation and therefore is a US occupation, regardless of what we would like it to be seen as.

Another issue that has been raised is the treatment of prisoners and the behaviour of some coalition troops. I do not know how many troops, from which countries, have committed illegal acts, but I know that those who have were encouraged in their actions by the attitude to human rights of some of their leaders. When we saw the treatment of prisoners arriving at Guantanamo bay from Afghanistan—even the pictures that we were allowed to see on television—most of us thought that it was degrading and a betrayal of human rights. When it suited us, we made much of the war on terrorism, calling it a war. On that pretext, we even involved NATO. However, as soon as we had prisoners we said that they could not be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva conventions, because—suddenly—this is not a war.

If Governments are prepared to overthrow the rule of law when it suits them, is it any wonder that some of the individual soldiers whom those Governments employ omit to obey the law when it suits them? In a dire emergency, any Government

has the right to suspend some rights temporarily. However, we have done so too readily and too often and have sent entirely the wrong signals to our own people and to other countries in the world.

I will say a word about the role of the UN. The actions of the United States and the United Kingdom have served to diminish the prestige and influence of the UN. Every time that we as countries act unilaterally, rather than through the United Nations, we diminish the UN and make the world a less safe place in the long term. The US may be successful in some actions, in some place, at some stage in the future. One might think that it had enough force to make a success of such actions, although it is not doing so at present. However, that approach offers no long-term path to world security—it simply creates division.

I raise the issue of selectivity. Michael McMahon and Andy Kerr both talked about the evilness of the Iraqi regime under Saddam and the murders that were committed. I remember Kurds attending SNP conferences some 20 years ago and talking about that situation, so we were well aware of it. The problem with Michael McMahon's and Andy Kerr's approach is that it raises the question of when we stop, or rather start, being the world policeman on our own initiative. Today we had with us the Dalai Lama. We have seen the gradual suppression of the Tibetan race and the murders in Tibet, but where is our military intervention there? Earlier Phil Gallie said that we will need to start to examine the Tibetan question. We have examined it for 50 years and done absolutely nothing about it. We cannot pick and choose our opponents on the whim of the President of the United States.

Our readiness—or rather, the Government's readiness—to back the United States compares very unfavourably with the conduct of a previous Labour leader, Harold Wilson. The President of the United States at the time tried to cajole him into intervening in Vietnam, but he took a principled stance and refused to get involved, even though we were told that if the United States failed in Vietnam it would be the end of democracy in south-east Asia and all the other dominoes in the region would fall. We did not intervene, the United States got out and south-east Asia is a far safer place than it was.

There is now no quick-fix solution for this problem, which is, significantly, a problem of our creation. However, I believe that the proposals in the SNP motion offer not a guarantee of success, but at least a possible way forward.

16:08

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Having represented the Greens at meetings of the



Scottish Coalition for Justice not War, I find it satisfying to debate these issues here today. I thank the SNP for lodging its motion.

Several members have mentioned the grasshopper debating tactics of members of the Government, who argued in favour of the war on Iraq. Robin Harper is right to say that if they had been honest, clear and consistent about the real reasons for the war, we would be in a different situation. Although I might still have opposed the war, I would have retained some shred of respect for the UK Government. However, every time that the Government was challenged on weapons of mass destruction it switched to the protection of Iraqi civilians—civilians whose bodies it stopped counting shortly after the invasion.

**Mr Kerr:** On the contrary—I said that most European and other developed nations in the world thought that there were weapons of mass destruction and that the Iraq survey group has not yet issued its report. Those were the points that I made—I did not ignore the issue entirely.

**Patrick Harvie:** I am discussing Government ministers' arguments in favour of the war in Iraq in the lead-up to the war, when, in putting the case for war to the British people, they switched from WMD to the protection of civilians. Then, when an argument came forward about those issues, the defence became upholding the authority of the UN. As soon as that argument was questioned, we were informed that Saddam Hussein was just a brutal dictator and that that was the reason for the war. When reminded that opponents of the war had been saying precisely that for years but the west had never seemed troubled before, the argument went back to WMD.

In short, any argument was used to avoid saying the word "oil". Oil is the factor that decided the powerful clique who rule the US Administration to go to war with Iraq long before 11 September. The Greens argue, as do others, that if the British Government wants to do something about WMD and peace, it should start by ending the testing of depleted uranium weapons at Dundrennan and their use in combat; it should end the deployment of the illegal and immoral Trident nuclear submarine system from the Faslane base on the Clyde; and it should dismantle the disgraceful international arms trade in which we participate. If the UK Government is not prepared to take those steps, the Scottish people should respond by electing to all levels of government in the UK parties that stand for peace and that would make Scotland a beacon of peace—which it could be.

I turn now to the amendments. Andy Kerr's amendment is unsupportable. We have all followed the machinations over the new UN resolution, to which Mr Kerr's amendment refers. However, it also refers to the

"formation of a sovereign interim government of Iraq and the end of the occupation by 30 June 2004".

That is untrue. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the occupation is due to continue until at least the end of 2005. Not only will the forces remain, they will be protected from the law and be immune from prosecution. If the Iraqi Government has been bred tame enough by the end of 2005, the occupation will be extended even further.

Mr Gallie's amendment also offers much with which to take issue. I could support his condemnation of false allegations of abuse if he had preceded it with a condemnation in the strongest terms of the actual abuse of which the coalition forces are guilty and of the policy context that has created a culture of human rights abuse among the occupying forces. As for the influential Scottish voice—

**Mike Rumbles:** Will the member give way?

**Patrick Harvie:** No, thank you.

As for the influential Scottish voice on the Security Council that Mr Gallie highly values, I reject any argument based on the current make-up of the Security Council. That we live in a world in which the body that is charged with achieving and maintaining world peace has a permanent seat at the table reserved for each of the world's five biggest arms dealers is beyond irony; it is corruption, plain and simple.

Jim Wallace's amendment refers to the motion that was agreed to on 13 March 2003, in which the Parliament asserted its belief that the authority of the UN is crucial to resolving conflicts in the middle east. However, in that debate, MSPs chose not to support Mr Wallace's amendment, which opposed military action without an explicit mandate. What value is there in asserting, endorsing, affirming and reaffirming a belief in the authority of the UN if that authority is ignored at every turn?

Let me once more recall the overwhelmingly peaceful and constructive atmosphere not only on the anti-war demonstrations but at the regular, big blockades at the home of British WMD—the Faslane base—in which activists from many political parties and none join. John Swinney has lent his support to such actions and I will support his motion today. I did not see any Labour MSPs at the most recent event at Faslane, so I end by extending an invitation to them to join us in friendship and in opposition to all weapons of mass destruction at Faslane on Monday 23 October this year.

16:14

**Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston)**  
**(Lab):** It is particularly poignant that we are

debating the Iraq issue on a day when we have been fortunate enough to have been addressed by one of the world's leading advocates for peace, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

More than 19 months after the massive rallies for peace here and abroad and more than a year since the so-called end of the war in Iraq, we are living in a much more dangerous and unstable world. In true Orwellian style, war is peace in this new world order. The phrase "war against terrorism" is incongruous. What does it mean? Does it mean killing innocents because innocents were killed? Does it mean protecting western lives by sending western forces to their deaths? Does it mean bombing people to liberate them? Does it mean promoting democracy and freedom by the use of force and occupation? Does it mean ridding the world of WMD by using WMD?

The latest estimates put the fatalities at around 11,000 since the Iraq war began. Despite President Bush's proclamation last year that the war was over, made as he stood in front of a banner that declared "Mission Accomplished", hundreds are still dying in Iraq—soldiers and civilians—just as hundreds of innocents died before this professed war of liberation from the sanctions that were imposed on Iraq, just as thousands died in Afghanistan in the first attack against the so-called axis of evil and just as hundreds are still dying in that country, seemingly forgotten by the west.

In the same way, the people of Cuba are suffering from a cruel regime of economic sanctions imposed by the USA and are now under threat, as President Bush showed last year when he said, "One thing we believe in in America is freedom for everybody. We love it for the people of Cuba. We love it for the people of Iraq. We love it for the people of Afghanistan." I think that people in Iraq and Afghanistan might question that idea of freedom and whether the end justifies the means. The Cubans certainly do not want it.

What was the mission and what has been accomplished? Well, where is the freedom for the people in Palestine, where is the freedom for trade unionists who are attacked and imprisoned across the globe and where is the freedom for the poverty-stricken millions throughout the world? In the absence of any weapons of mass destruction, what was our mission and reason for such unconditional alignment with the US? What has the war on terror, with its promises of liberation and democracy, meant here at home? It has meant cuts to public spending to pay for the wars. It has meant people being scared to travel and travel being made more difficult by new rules, with armed marshals on flights out of Glasgow airport. There are reports today of a worrying rise in Islamophobia and an unprecedented rise in British

National Party activity. Mission accomplished?

The war has meant attacks on civil liberties, including new proposals to arrest, detain and even find people guilty without proper recourse to our legal system. People, including British citizens, are still detained in Guantanamo bay, and there are draconian proposals for asylum seekers, with Government ministers referring last week to "illegal asylum seekers", when there is no such thing. Children and their families are still locked up, to Scotland's shame, in Dungavel. Mission accomplished?

We have witnessed a scramble to join the carpetbaggers descending on Iraq to get their hands on oil and reconstruction contracts—the spoils of war for the winners—but even those entrepreneurs are now having second thoughts as they are targeted in the unstable aftermath of the war, which has bred terrorist attacks. The troops are now increasingly viewed as an army of occupation, and that view is exacerbated by the reports of atrocities against prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison. Mission accomplished? So much for this brave new world. Like many people, I fear that what we are seeing is, in fact, the projection of a new American century.

People throughout the world are suffering and dying from the effects of rampant capitalism and the middle east is in turmoil. The world is more violent and unsafe than it was before the attack on the twin towers. How can it be safer, with cluster bombs, unexploded mines and depleted uranium littering the globe? How can we liberate people by waging war on them, bombing them and allowing them to suffer in the aftermath? Why are innocent civilians in the countries that we wage war on merely collateral damage? Why are innocent American lives worth more than innocent lives in the middle east? How do we teach our children that violence and terrorism are wrong while war is waged in our name using weapons of mass destruction against innocents?

Mission accomplished? There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq posing an imminent threat to us, and war cannot be justified on the ground of regime change. The troops should be replaced with a UN peacekeeping force until stability is established in Iraq, and Britain must re-engage with the UN and with our European neighbours and put some clear blue water between us and US imperialism. Unfortunately, none of the suggestions before us today provides a satisfactory answer to the unholy mess of our making. However, that does not detract from our debating the issue or from the fact that voices in this Parliament should join with those in the anti-war movement to redouble our efforts for peace in this world. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the world, we should speak out for

an end to poverty, deprivation, suffering and imperialist wars. That would be a mission worth accomplishing.

16:19

**Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (Ind):** We have just heard one of the best speeches so far in this Parliament. I would like to associate myself with Elaine Smith's peroration, in particular what she said about few of the words in today's motion and amendments providing a satisfactory solution to the problem. I will come back to that later.

The mess that is British policy on Iraq and the wider middle east was predictable. Before the war, al-Qa'ida was a small organisation that was based mainly in the border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Now, it is estimated to number about 18,000 people and its offshoots are to be found in countries as widespread as Indonesia, Australia, the United Kingdom, Tunisia, Morocco, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey. That probably answers the only weak point in Michael McMahon's otherwise admirable speech. When we consider the list of countries that now harbour al-Qa'ida members, there can be no justification for our going into one country with whose regime we disagreed.

Bush and Blair lied—they lied about weapons of mass destruction and Blair either lied or showed incredible incompetence in claiming not to know that the rocket-delivery system that was supposed to threaten us here in Europe was, in fact, a battlefield weapon system and not an intercontinental one. That fact alone means that our credibility has been gravely damaged in the middle east.

The political incompetence of Bush and Blair is staggering. They support a double standard in international law, and the actions of the Americans in their treatment of prisoners and their methods of policing Iraq—with tanks and random fire killing thousands of Iraqis—border on the insane. While the Arab world watches on Aljazeera television as Americans shoot up a wedding party, it also sees Israeli bulldozers smash the houses and farms of Palestinians. While the Iraqis pay the price of occupation, Israel is rewarded—with American backing and weasel words from Tony Blair—for its brutal occupation of Arab land. If Bush and Blair had set out deliberately to stimulate al-Qa'ida, they could not have done it better than by using the policies that they have pursued. They have stoked fires of hatred that will take generations to cool even if, as we all must hope, the United Nations provides an alternative security force to the US and British forces that are in Iraq now.

I want now to turn to the motion and the amendments, which Elaine Smith said were

unsatisfactory. I agree with her. First of all, it is right that the SNP motion has been debated. I will be frank: in this context, I do not care whether there is a European election or not, and neither do other Scots—especially the 75 per cent of those who answered the BBC poll that was published today. Those people expressed their disapproval of what is being done in their name. The SNP motion is superficial in its analysis and in its remedy. As we have already heard, blithely to suggest a Muslim-only armed force is infantile.

The Tories' amendment is out of touch with Scottish opinion. I do not think that Phil Gallie speaks for Scotland when he appears to support ever more engagement in Iraq. However, I believe that the Tories could and should vote according to what they believe and according to their conscience. They were bounced into supporting Blair in his adventure because Iain Duncan Smith made a poor decision, which I glimpsed in some of Phil Gallie's remarks. If his decision was wrong then, it is wrong now.

I do not think that the Tories should give any succour to the Labour Party's amendment, which says all the right things, except that the policy that it advocates is more of the same. That policy has failed to enthuse the other countries in the region, on whom the amendment says Iraq's security depends. None of the countries that border Iraq supports the policy. I think that there is also a small mistake in the Labour Party's amendment—it says that the UN should take "a leading role"; it does not say "the leading role". I wonder whether that is a mistake. Perhaps we will find out during the winding-up speeches.

The Liberal Democrats' amendment is consistent, but it fails to make a link to the Israeli Government's outrageous treatment of the Palestinians. That link cannot be ignored. In that respect, the SSP's amendment is superior but—unfortunately—it also calls for withdrawal "immediately" of British troops. If that is meant literally, I think that it would be impossible to achieve. If it means that it should be done as soon as possible, I might find it possible to vote for the SSP amendment. Perhaps we can have clarification on that, as well.

One thing that I refuse to do is to endorse the Labour amendment and have this Parliament cravenly and obscenely vote for something that most of us do not believe in.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):** There will be a brief speech from Mike Rumbles.

16:25

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** Whatever the rights and wrongs of the political decision to commit our

troops to war in Iraq—in my view there were many wrongs—the fact is that the young men and women of our armed forces are in Iraq risking their lives on our behalf and are doing their duty well. I am surprised that, of the motion and amendments that have been lodged, only two amendments specifically recognise the bravery and professionalism of our armed forces in difficult and dangerous circumstances. The amendment in Jim Wallace's name makes it clear that Her Majesty's Government must not commit further troops unless they are requested specifically by our military commanders in Iraq, either to secure the safety of our forces or to fulfil our obligations to the people of Iraq. Our troops must not be used for any other reason.

I am appalled at the attitude of Mr Swinney, who clearly confused criticism of the politics that were involved in taking us into this disastrous war with the professionalism and dedication of our servicemen and women who are operating in the field. I hope that in winding up, the SNP will reflect on that misjudgment and I hope that by backing the Liberal Democrat amendment the Scottish Parliament can at least send a clear message of support to the young men and women who are doing a difficult and dangerous job to the very best of their ability.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We go to winding-up speeches. I call Campbell Martin to conclude for the amendment in Mr Sheridan's name.

**Members:** Ooh!

16:26

**Campbell Martin (West of Scotland) (SNP):** Steady on—I will come to Labour members later.

I thank my friends in the Scottish Socialist Party for allowing me to contribute to the debate, which has been interesting. My good friend John Swinney, the leader of the Scottish National Party, made an interesting point when he said that to pull troops out of Iraq now would mean leaving Iraqis to their fate. I would have thought that the leader of the Scottish National Party would have regarded national self-determination as a good thing.

Andy Kerr's speech was absolutely appalling; he was clearly going for the brown-noser of the year award. His slavish loyalty to the right-wing policies of new Labour was appropriately endorsed by the Tory party. It was interesting that Phil Gallie, on behalf of the Tories, admitted that he thought that it was right when it happened that we sold weapons to Saddam Hussein. Maybe at some other time he will explain why it was right.

This debate is about the international situation,

but the international situation is, of course, for the Iraqi people a national situation that affects them daily. Over the past year, the people of Iraq have witnessed the illegal invasion of their country and an illegal war in their country. About 4,000 Iraqi children and about 20,000 Iraqi men and women have been killed by foreign military personnel. During the year since President Bush declared victory, the Iraqi people have experienced only death, destruction and degradation at the hands of an invading force. That is the reality for the Iraqi people and that is their perception of the international situation that we are discussing today.

The appointment yesterday of an interim President for Iraq was a step in a better direction, but it leaves questions to be answered about the extent of Iraqi sovereignty when the new Government takes control, about control over foreign military personnel on Iraqi soil and about the use of Iraqi oil revenues. There is still only a target date for withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraqi soil and December 2005 remains the date for permanent handover to an Iraqi Government. The statement that the interim Iraqi President made yesterday was significant. He said that the US-drafted UN resolution that sets out the handover plan gives the Iraqis too little control over foreign troops and Iraqi oil revenues.

I am pleased to support the SSP amendment because I think that it best describes how the people of Scotland feel about the invasion of Iraq and about the war and the current situation in Iraq. Also, crucially for me, it calls for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

It was bad enough that young Scots were sent to invade Iraq at the behest of an American President and in the interests of American oil corporations who wanted to get their hands on Iraqi oil reserves, but that wrong has been compounded by the fact that those young Scots still occupy Iraq, where they are in real danger every time they set foot on an Iraqi street. The reason why they are in real danger is that the people of Iraq perceive them to be part of an American invasion force.

This international situation has come about because the American President and the British Prime Minister were prepared to lie to the people whom they are supposed to represent.

**Mr Kerr:** On the subject of brown-nosing, is Mr Martin prepared to defend the allegations that he made in a recent issue of *Scotland on Sunday* in which he said that Mr Swinney "wobbled" on the matter? Will Mr Martin publish his detailed notes of the conversation at SNP Cabinet?

**Campbell Martin:** Certainly, but not to you.

The people of Britain were lied to by a Prime

Minister who represented your unionist party. The people of Scotland were lied to by a Prime Minister who represented your unionist party. Iraq did not have chemical or biological weapons. Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had no weapons other than those that it was sold by Britain and America when Saddam Hussein was our best pal because he was using the weapons to kill Iranians, whom we did not like at the time. That is the reality.

The position that was taken by the Labour leader of the United Kingdom Government was all lies and you supported it. Bush and Blair knew that it was all lies—I have a copy of the document “Rebuilding America’s Defences: Strategies, Forces and Resources For A New Century”, which was published by the Project for the New American Century in September 2000. That was four months before Bush stole the American presidency and a year before the atrocity at the World Trade Center. The document sets out the blueprint for an invasion of Iraq. A year before the attack on the World Trade Center, the Americans were determined to invade Iraq. The organisation that published the document included people like Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Jeb Bush. The people who planned to invade Iraq are now in positions of power in the American Government—they lied to the American people and Blair supported their lies.

Last month, Geoff Hoon said that it costs £4 million a day to keep British troops in Iraq. The SSP amendment today says that that money should be used to bring about a lasting peace in the middle east. Let us stop spending £4 million a day on sending people to Iraq to kill Iraqi people. Let us start using it to build peace in the middle east.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Robert Brown to close for the Liberal Democrats.

16:33

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** We have had a very worthwhile debate today on a subject that is far more serious than most subjects that are debated routinely in this chamber or at Westminster. As Keith Raffan said, it is entirely right that we debate Iraq in the Scottish Parliament. The SNP can take some credit for affording us the opportunity to do so today.

We will come soon to decision time. We should consider carefully what the Scottish Parliament does on an issue for which the United Kingdom Government alone has responsibility. The chamber of the Scottish Parliament is not a university debating chamber, neither should it be treated as a place for a political rally or as an audience for a rant. The Scottish Parliament has

to consider how and in what direction it may be able to influence things for the better and, in so doing, to speak for the people of Scotland.

There is a major fault line in the chamber and in the country between those who backed the war—primarily the Labour Party, the Labour Government and the Conservatives—and those who did not. I must confess that Andy Kerr showed considerable gall in upbraiding the SNP for picking and choosing which United Nations resolutions to support. The purpose and reason for our being in Iraq meant that we were there without United Nations sanction for our action at that time.

The huge demonstrations at the anti-war rallies in Glasgow and London all those months ago—which it would have done Mr Kerr considerable benefit to have attended—were primarily staged not by political activists, but by ordinary citizens who were worried and upset that this country of ours was being taken into a war for an uncertain cause in which they had no faith and for which they had considerable distaste. The question about why we are in Iraq has been asked. Why are we not in Korea? Why are we not in Tibet? Why are we not in Zimbabwe taking out Robert Mugabe? Why are we in Iraq?

We suspected then and we know now that there were no Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and that there was no threat to the safety of the United Kingdom or the world community. The UN weapons inspectors should have had time to complete their job. We sympathised with the trauma of our friends in the United States over the events of 9/11, but we were not persuaded that those events had their origins in Iraq. Above all, we could not support a war that did not have the UN’s sanction and we wondered how the many decent internationalists in the Labour Party could support it.

In the months since then, our worst fears have been realised. I do not want to go over them—they have been given ample voice by many speakers. However, the starting point today has to be recognition of the huge mistakes that have been made by the Prime Minister and the Labour Government in backing George Bush’s foolish venture in Iraq. I do not speak of deception and lies; such words are redolent of an unpleasant and arrogant self-righteousness, which is at best unhelpful to the debate. However, there rests on those who, in the name of this country, involve themselves in war in other countries a duty to provide overwhelming and substantial proof. That duty has not been discharged by our Prime Minister or by the Labour Government.

There is no expression—in the weasel words of the Labour amendment or of the highly unsuitable and partisan speech of Andy Kerr in introducing it—of regret and no recognition of how we got

where we are today. Liberal Democrats will be voting against the Labour amendment, as our colleagues did against similar sentiments in Westminster.

Of course, the Conservatives have been the main cheerleaders for Mr Blair, notwithstanding their transparent attempts to fish and to duck in the troubled waters of the Hutton and Butler inquiries. The rest of us, and at least eight Labour MSPs—enough to provide a majority in the chamber tonight—were against the war, but being against the war is not now a policy. Being against the war does not help us now. We are where we are and the question is how we will move forward.

Margo MacDonald lamented the lack of suitable and satisfactory solutions in the amendments today, and she was right; there are no satisfactory and suitable solutions to the problem. Immediate withdrawal would be as irresponsible as it would be dangerous. The coalition created a civil authority vacuum in Iraq. There must be no open-ended commitment, but the coalition must stay for long enough to help the interim Iraqi Government to clear up the mess and to ensure that there are free and fair elections.

**Tommy Sheridan:** Robert Brown said that immediate withdrawal would be irresponsible. Does he believe that the democratically elected Spanish Government acted irresponsibly by withdrawing its troops, or did it just display the courage of its convictions?

**Robert Brown:** It is one thing for one Government that contributes as small a contingent as the Spanish did to make the gesture of withdrawing, but it is another thing altogether for the whole of the coalition force in Iraq to withdraw without there being in place a civil authority that is capable of sustaining law and order.

Jim Wallace laid out the principles that we should apply in approaching the matter.

**Margo MacDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Robert Brown:** I am sorry, but I have to make progress.

Liberal Democrats and many others have stated throughout the piece that the United Nations holds the key. Its role must be expanded and enhanced and its authority built up, but the idea of having a blue beret force and a UN command structure, as was suggested by the SNP, is simplistic nonsense. Such a structure cannot be brought into being and it does not exist at present.

This is my final point, which I would like members to contemplate. There is a good chance that none of the propositions that are before Parliament will command the support of the chamber. The issue is whether we are to accept a sycophantic motion that supports Tony Blair, or an

alternative that condemns the war, recognises the vital significance of the Palestine question, argues against further commitment of UK forces except in limited circumstances, and supports the need for effective UN authority in Iraq. That alternative can only be the Liberal Democrat amendment, which was supported by the SNP in the debate in the House of Commons, and which represents a principled and practical way forward for all those who are opposed to, and appalled by, the UK presence in Iraq. I seriously urge all members who were against the war in the first place to make their voices heard today and to send a message to the Prime Minister by backing the Liberal Democrat amendment.

16:39

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con):** I agree with Robert Brown that, whatever debates we have had in the past, we must move on. I am glad to speak to Phil Gallie's amendment. I mention an interest: I am associated with No 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron and I have been an army reservist for many years.

Like Phil Gallie and Mike Rumbles, I believe that maximum support should be given to the British armed services, which are performing with great ability in difficult and sensitive circumstances. I pay tribute to those who work in the regular armed services and to those who have served for prolonged periods as volunteers. We recommend strongly that the British Government support British commanders in whatever requests they make for equipment or manpower in order to fulfil their duties. We also urge the Government to make sufficient provision of the necessary resources to ensure that the job is well done and that there is sufficient humanitarian and economic assistance. Our determination is that the matter be seen through to a successful conclusion, which would be that the people of Iraq determine their affairs through a stable, democratic and well-ordered country that is governed by the rule of law and not by a dictator who is only too happy to kill anybody who stands in the way.

This afternoon's debate takes place against a background of volatility in Iraq. If we were, with the Americans, to withdraw immediately, the outcome would almost certainly be civil war, which is not the outcome that we seek. Of course, it is desirable to involve the United Nations, which is why President Bush set out on 24 May five steps to achieving freedom of democracy. He wants the handover of authority to a sovereign Iraqi Government, stability and security, a rebuilt infrastructure, more international support and movement towards free national elections. The new US and United Kingdom draft resolution that has been put before the UN Security Council calls

for the endorsement of a sovereign Government of Iraq, a commitment by the United Nations to help with elections, the interim Government to control Iraqi oil funds under international supervision and support for a US-led multinational force.

Michael Howard said:

"We fully support the continuing deployment of British troops in Iraq ... Notwithstanding the very great difficulties that are clearly present in Iraq today, I agree with the Government that it is essential that we see this through; and, like the Prime Minister, I reject the criticism of those who suggest that we should now pull out."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 19 April 2004; Vol 420, c 23.]

**Frances Curran (West of Scotland) (SSP):** Does the member agree with Douglas Hurd, the former Tory Foreign Secretary, who said that any army that is made up of troops from America and Britain turns within hours from an army of liberation into an army of occupation?

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** No. I have great respect for Douglas Hurd, but I disagree with him on that point. We are a liberating country and we must never be ambushed into becoming an army of occupation; that is not and must never be our purpose. We are in Iraq as part of a process of transition. We have a moral obligation to hand over the reins of power to the new Iraqi Government with responsibility, good order, speed and efficiency. We must remember that Saddam Hussein posed a considerable threat. He killed thousands or maybe hundreds of thousands of Shia Muslims and dropped weapons of mass destruction on Halabjah. The threat that was posed by him and his regime has gone, but other problems have arisen. People are concerned that the transition to democracy is proving to be extremely turbulent, but that should not deter us from the goal of achieving a democratic outcome.

I refer Frances Curran to the words of Sir Winston Churchill, who said:

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

A full democratic solution must be put in place, with the people of Iraq firmly in control. When that is achieved, our servicemen and women will come home in the certain knowledge that theirs has been a job well done. It follows that we should act with consistency, courage and conviction to make certain, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, that

"government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

16:44

**Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab):** Most people in Scotland would probably prefer us to pay more attention to debating the issues that fall within the Parliament's responsibility. We have wide-ranging powers and I

am not sure that people are terribly impressed by the frequent debates on foreign affairs that the Opposition initiates. However, as a British citizen, I am very happy to have my say on the problems that face the world today and I am happy to take part in the debate on that basis. I take the opportunity to restate my strong support for Scotland's powerful and positive role in the United Kingdom and our foreign policy. In particular, I express my strong support for the effective and essential contribution that Scotland makes to the United Kingdom's strong and disciplined armed forces.

**Alasdair Morgan:** Does John Home Robertson think that Scotland's role in the United Kingdom was diminished when Robin Cook left the Cabinet?

**Mr Home Robertson:** I thought that Robin Cook was an excellent Foreign Secretary.

I am proud of and grateful to the Scottish service personnel who are deployed in Iraq and I was delighted to welcome the men of the Royal Scots regiment back to my constituency last month after their deployment in the Basra area. I hope that we all share the objectives of establishing a secure, independent and democratic Iraq and of getting all foreign forces out of that country as soon as possible. Much has been said about armies of occupation, but the big difference with the army of occupation in Iraq is that our objective is to get out of Iraq and hand power back to its people. I welcome the important steps that were made towards that objective yesterday.

The situation in Iraq is obviously extremely difficult, but, to put the point simply, it would not be a good idea to walk away and let Saddam Hussein return to power.

**Tommy Sheridan:** Nonsense. He is in jail.

**Mr Home Robertson:** Mr Sheridan says that it is nonsense, but if we were to leave a vacuum we would create a phenomenally dangerous situation—even Mr Sheridan must be able to grasp that point. The job will have to be completed with the active involvement of the United Nations.

The crisis in Iraq is inextricably linked with the other middle-east problem. I will say a few words about my experiences last month as a volunteer in Palestine with Edinburgh Direct Aid.

**Carolyn Leckie:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Home Robertson:** Of course.

**Carolyn Leckie:** I will be interested to hear what John Home Robertson says about Palestine, given that his party's amendment offers no solution. Perhaps he can explain why Palestine has been omitted from the amendment.

**Mr Home Robertson:** Sorry, I thought that

Carolyn Leckie was going to say something sensible.

I will say a word or two about Palestine because it is important. Edinburgh Direct Aid has a lot of experience of working in areas of conflict and areas of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo. We went to the area around Ramallah to deliver aid from Scotland and to learn about the situation in the west bank. We have all read about the occupation of the west bank and Gaza since 1967, we are familiar with the term "intifada" and we know about the horrors of suicide bombings in Israeli towns, but nothing prepared me for the scale and intensity of the systematic strangulation of what is left of Palestine by the Likud Government in Israel with the open consent of the world's only superpower.

People in the United States and Europe must acknowledge the fact—although it may be difficult to believe it in a world that is still celebrating the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of apartheid in South Africa—that another wall is being built and that racial apartheid has been reinvented in the middle east. Palestinian Arabs are subject to pass laws that randomly prevent them from going to work, school, college or even hospital and they are subject to random detention. On 9 May, I saw two people being forced to kneel for more than an hour in blazing sunshine with their hands tied behind their backs while armed Israeli soldiers kicked and punched them at the Qalandiya checkpoint.

That is not all. The 30ft-high, Berlin-style wall is being constructed many miles outside the borders of the state of Israel to secure even more land and the best water supplies in the area for new Israeli settlements and to cut off Palestinians from their land and neighbours. For example, the wall cuts across roads and goes through the sports ground of the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. I also met a family whose house is about to be demolished to make way for the wall, which may even have happened in the past day or so. That is an obscenity.

Many Israelis are horrified at what is being done in their name. In particular, 400 Israeli women in Machsom Watch are actively monitoring the conduct of soldiers at checkpoints in the occupied territories as part of a campaign for peace with their neighbours. They deserve our support.

The wall and the systematic suppression of the people of Palestine can only be a recipe for endless conflict in the middle east and is poisoning relations between Muslims and the rest of the world.

**Shona Robison:** I do not disagree with a word that the member has said about the situation for the Palestinians, but I would like him to explain why there is no mention of it in the Labour

amendment and what on earth his Government is doing about it. Given that it has the power to do something, why is it doing nothing?

**Mr Home Robertson:** I was just coming to that important point. Last year, before the intervention in Iraq, our Prime Minister sought and obtained undertakings from the President of the United States that a fair settlement for Palestine would be linked to British support for the action in Iraq. The Prime Minister's Labour colleagues accepted those assurances in good faith, but, one year later, the situation in Palestine is going from bad to worse. There have been more deaths and more demolitions in the latest incursions into Gaza, another massive section of the concrete wall will have been erected while I have been speaking and people throughout the west bank and Gaza are being subjected to apartheid-style restrictions, detentions, demolitions, beatings and worse.

We all want the restoration of sovereignty and security in Iraq as soon as possible, but there will be no security for anyone until there is a fair settlement for the running sore in Palestine. The promises given to the British Government last year about action to deliver the road map for peace must be fulfilled, primarily to achieve long-delayed justice for the people of Palestine, but also to achieve real security for Israel. The fulfilment of those promises is an absolutely essential basis for civilised relations between the Arab world and the rest of the world. That is the important point.

**Carolyn Leckie:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I wonder whether you can give us guidance on the standards and the procedures that should be followed in relation to members speaking to the subject of amendments. Obviously the previous speaker did not speak to the amendment and he was supposed to be summing up.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The purpose of a closing speech is to respond to the debate. I have been here since 4 o'clock and, given that several members have discussed Palestine, it seems reasonable, in the encompassing spirit of the debate, that Palestine was referred to in the closing speech. It is entirely a matter for the member to decide which material to select.

16:53

**Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP):** I think that you were being just a little kind there, Presiding Officer. While I was listening to John Home Robertson, I wondered whether he had wandered in from another debate that was taking place elsewhere. It sounded to me as if we got nine or seven minutes—whatever it was—of a justification for an invasion of Israel. I am sure that that is not what he was arguing for, but it sure as



heck sounded like it.

I had hoped that the debate would show the Parliament at its best. Did that happen? Well it could have happened, but then Andy Kerr got to his feet. His contribution from the Labour front bench was an absolutely pitiful failure to rise to the occasion. He talked about integrity but showed throughout his speech that he does not know the meaning of the word.

There are things about which we can be in no doubt and on which we will all agree. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who carried out numerous atrocities against his own people, not least the Iraqi Kurds, with whom the SNP feels a strong affinity. Like my colleague Alasdair Morgan, I remember as long as 20 years ago the flag of Kurdistan being unfurled on our conference platform when the likes of Donald Rumsfeld were doing deals direct with the butcher of Baghdad and when the UK and US Governments were supporting his atrocities against Iran. At least Michael McMahon had the grace to acknowledge that, even though I did not agree with everything that he said in his speech.

**Frances Curran:** Does the member agree that the Parliament should welcome members of DEHAP, the party that has been banned five times in Turkey and that represents the Kurdish people? They should be welcomed to the Parliament, because we know exactly what Saddam Hussein did to the Kurds.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** It goes without saying that we welcome all visitors to the Parliament.

Those who want to lecture us on the evils of Saddam will get short shrift from me, but I accept that there can come a point in international affairs when it becomes necessary for the international community to tell an individual dictator or Government that enough is enough. Only a pacifist—which I am not—would refuse to accept the possibility that intolerable behaviour might result in the necessity of the use of force.

However, the overriding issue is that the basis on which we act must stay within international law. Just as our criminal justice system at home does not permit individuals to take the law into their own hands, so on the international stage we cannot allow individual states to go off on their own by ignoring the rule of law and engaging in the international equivalent of getting up a posse and setting out as a lynch mob.

Let us be quite clear: the war was illegal and it was based on a lie. It was illegal because there was no UN mandate for the use of force or an armed invasion of Iraq. Given everything that we were told about stockpiles of banned weapons, chemical facilities, mobile laboratories and nuclear programmes, the truth is now clear: at worst, what

we were told was all a tissue of lies; at best, it was a paranoid self-delusion, brought on by a political interpretation of intelligence that was manipulated to provide a justification for war.

I am sorry, although not surprised, to discover that some MSPs are still prepared to provide that self-same justification, but there are others who have not been prepared to do so. I commend among others Keith Raffan—with whom I do not always agree, but who made a commendable speech today—and Elaine Smith, whose speech was inspired. Equally, I commend Robert Brown for the admirable comments that he made in closing for the Liberal Democrats.

However, we also heard some very silly speeches, from Pauline McNeill and Irene Oldfather, about which party has had which debates and when and where those have taken place. It is crystal clear that Tony Blair and new Labour do not want to debate this issue. The SNP has initiated today's debate because of the 30 June deadline, but that appears to have escaped the notice of Labour back benchers.

For Irene Oldfather's information, the SNP and Plaid Cymru are allowed a debate in the House of Commons on only one day each year. On 9 March last year, the subject that they chose to debate was the need for the Attorney General to publish his advice on the legality of the war. Irene Oldfather said that she wanted to put politics aside, but she seemed not to want to do so without attacking the SNP.

We have heard a lot of sound and fury from the Executive benches in today's debate, so I want to take some time to address the claims that have been made. We have, of course, heard precious little intervention from Labour ministers other than Andy Kerr. According to the opinion poll on the BBC today, Scotland is the part of the UK that is most opposed to the war, but where is the voice of those people in this Parliament? The silence of the Executive leadership is a shameful disgrace.

The general line appears to have been that it is valid for party members to hold a range of views unless the party to which they belong happens to be the SNP, the SSP or the Greens, for whom a range of views is not valid. The empty Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory benches that we have seen throughout this afternoon are testament to the collective failure of those parties to understand the importance of today's debate to ordinary Scots, who are appalled at the failure of politicians to reflect their views. The Conservative voice was rather muted, but I suspect that that reflects the uncertainty that now exists at the top of their party.

**Mr Kerr:** I am not sure whether the member sits on the SNP shadow Cabinet, but if she has always been so clear, coherent and fixed in her argument,

can she clarify what no other SNP member whom I have asked has been able to do by explaining why Mr Swinney wobbled all over the place at meetings of his Cabinet?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** When the Executive is prepared to disclose the detailed discussions that take place at its Cabinet, we will disclose the discussions that take place at ours.

The war was declared to have been won and Saddam was ousted, but nobody was in any doubt about that outcome, which was virtually guaranteed by the technical and logistical superiority of the US forces in particular. However, as we have warned from the very start, the peace has proved much harder to secure. The actions of Bush and Blair in Iraq have not sorted out an international problem but exacerbated it and they have contributed to a massive increase in global instability.

Fear levels have increased dramatically among ordinary people who go about their daily lives around the world. Once upon a time, we were all terrified of nuclear explosions, but now it is the terrorist bomb that fills us with dread. Despite what the US intelligence services would have us believe, there was no link between al-Qa'ida and Iraq before the war, but there sure as heck is now. John Swinney mentioned a report that describes the occupation of Iraq as

“a potent global recruitment pretext”

for Osama bin Laden. That translates into, “We improved their recruitment figures.” What an own goal. Insurgency in Iraq continues and it shows no sign of abating or being brought under control—no wonder, when the coalition forces are seen more as an army of occupation than as an army of liberation.

Continued reports and horrifying evidence of prisoner abuse continue to appal us in Scotland; I cannot imagine their impact in Iraq. The lives of British soldiers in Iraq are further endangered with every incident that is uncovered. I say with considerable regret that the truth of the allegations is probably now immaterial. The fact is that people believe that such incidents are happening in Iraq and around the world. The UK is so closely linked to the US that our soldiers cannot escape being linked to the admitted abuses that have been carried out by US troops and indeed by private contractors.

In that light, I learned with a heavy heart that the Black Watch, the regiment from my constituency and from John Swinney's constituency, is to be sent back to Iraq, having already performed one tour of duty, during which it lost one of its comrades, Lance-Corporal Barry Stephen of Perth, who was the first Scottish casualty of the war. Many of my constituents will be extremely

concerned as their loved ones prepare to head out to Iraq and our thoughts are very much with them as we debate the issue today. For Mike Rumbles to suggest otherwise was unworthy of him.

**Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The member is in her last minute.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** If the situation is to be turned around and we are to start contributing to a safer Iraq and a safer world, we must ensure that the transfer of sovereignty is on track and on time and that it is seen to be a true transfer of power rather than the installation of a puppet regime.

**Mike Rumbles:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Presiding Officer:** The member is in her last minute.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** Given the plan that we have seen today, people must remember that armed intervention in Vietnam was always at the carefully orchestrated behest of the south Vietnamese Government. The way in which we are proceeding will not necessarily solve the problem. The debate should be all about legitimacy. I say to the minister that there are many examples around the world of Islamic troops undertaking peacekeeping roles and it is a disgrace for him to suggest that they are not capable of doing that.

I say to the SSP and others that the SNP has always looked to the UN to mandate action and we will always do so, but that means accepting the decisions that the UN makes—one cannot pick and choose whether to go with the UN. Nor is it responsible politics to call for overnight withdrawal, which would be a betrayal of the Iraqi people as big as anything that has happened in the past 18 months.

We know that the vast majority of Scots are opposed to the war and we have seen that again today. Their voice deserves to be heard and it is an indictment of the paucity of vision in the Executive, in particular, that these matters are only ever discussed in the chamber at the instigation of the Opposition. The UK Government does not speak for Scotland and the Executive does not seem to want to. This Parliament must.

## Business Motion

17:03

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item is consideration of motion S2M-1358, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 9 June 2004

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Executive Business

*followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 16 June 2004

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Executive Business

*followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 17 June 2004

9.30 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Stage 3 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill

12 noon First Minister's Question Time

2.00 pm Question Time—  
Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Transport;  
Justice and Law Officers;  
General Questions

3.00 pm Continuation of Stage 3 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business.—[Patricia Ferguson.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:03

**The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** The next item of business is consideration of 11 Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Patricia Ferguson to move motions S2M-1379 to S2M-1389 inclusive, all on the designation of lead committees.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the draft Advice and Assistance (Financial Limit) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2004.

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Body Form of Application for Consent to Buy Croft Land etc. and Notice of Minister's Decision (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/224).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Grant Towards Compensation Liability) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/225).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Compensation) (Scotland) Order 2004 (SSI 2004/226).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Ballot) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/227).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Ballot) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/228).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Compensation) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/229).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Register of Community Interests in Land Charges) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/230).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Specification of Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/231).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Forms) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/233).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the draft Advice and Assistance (Assistance by Way of Representation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2004.—[Patricia Ferguson.]

**The Presiding Officer:** The question on those motions will be put at decision time.

## Decision Time

17:04

### The Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):

There are 16 questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S2M-1374.5, in the name of Andy Kerr, which seeks to amend motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

### AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)

Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 42, Against 74, Abstentions 3.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The second question is, that amendment S2M-1374.2, in the name of Phil Gallie, which seeks to amend motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**FOR**

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)

**AGAINST**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)

Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 18, Against 101, Abstentions 2.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The third question is, that amendment S2M-1374.4, in the name of Jim Wallace, which seeks to amend motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### FOR

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)

#### AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 17, Against 98, Abstentions 5.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The fourth question is, that amendment S2M-1374.3, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, which seeks to amend motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**FOR**

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

**AGAINST**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 8, Against 101, Abstentions 12.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The fifth question is, that motion S2M-1374, in the name of John Swinney, on the international situation, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West) (Ind)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Martin, Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (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)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)



Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Turner, Dr Jean (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Ind)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 38, Against 62, Abstentions 0.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. There is an issue about that vote, on which I abstained, as did, I believe, many of my colleagues.

**The Presiding Officer:** I will repeat the figures. The result of the division was: For 38, Against 62, Abstentions 21.

*Motion disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next 11 questions are on the designation of lead committees. Unless any member objects, I propose to put a single question on all 11 motions. The final question is, that motions S2M-1379 to S2M-1389 inclusive, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on the designation of lead committees, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the draft Advice and Assistance (Financial Limit) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2004.

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Body Form of Application for Consent to Buy Croft Land etc. and Notice of Minister's Decision (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/224).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Grant Towards Compensation Liability) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/225).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Compensation) (Scotland) Order 2004 (SSI 2004/226).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Crofting Community Right to Buy (Ballot) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/227).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Ballot) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/228).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Compensation) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/229).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Register of Community Interests in Land Charges) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/230).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Specification of Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/231).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 1 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the Community Right to Buy (Forms) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (SSI 2004/233).

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice 2 Committee be designated as lead committee in consideration of the draft Advice and Assistance (Assistance by Way of Representation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2004.

## Affordable Housing (North-east Fife)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S2M-1329, in the name of Iain Smith, on affordable housing in north-east Fife. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes with concern the shortage of affordable housing for rent or sale in many communities in north-east Fife; recognises that this is due to many factors including the decline in the amount of public sector rented accommodation, the popularity of many communities as retirement and holiday locations and, in the case of St Andrews, the accommodation needs of the growing student population; expresses its concern about the difficulties faced by many people in trying to obtain affordable accommodation in their own communities and the pressures on rural services such as schools, and considers that Fife Council, Communities Scotland and the Scottish Executive should develop an effective housing plan for north-east Fife that addresses these concerns to ensure viable, vibrant and sustainable communities throughout north-east Fife.

17:13

**Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD):** I thank the Parliamentary Bureau, and members who supported my motion, for giving me the opportunity to secure this debate on affordable housing in north-east Fife. I also thank the minister and members who have stayed to contribute to the debate.

The debate is intended not to be used to criticise those who are responsible for social housing provision in north-east Fife—whether it be Fife Council, Communities Scotland or the Scottish Executive—but to be an opportunity to highlight the significant housing problems that exist in rural communities such as north-east Fife.

Housing problems are often pigeonholed as urban issues and I do not underestimate the significant housing issues that affect many of our towns and cities. It is, perhaps, inevitable that housing policy makers have tended to focus on issues that affect cities such as Glasgow or Dundee, but we should not forget the problems that face many of our smaller communities. Solutions that may be right for Glasgow or Dundee might not work in Gauldry or Dunshalt.

The shortage of affordable housing is a very real problem in many rural communities. The factors behind the shortage are by no means unique to north-east Fife, but we are perhaps unique in having so many of them affect us at the same time. Those factors include the sale of council houses; the number of second and holiday homes;

the fact that north-east Fife is a nice place to retire to; increased commuting; the growing student population; and the general increase in the number of households. All those factors contribute to the increased demand for housing and the shortage of affordable housing in north-east Fife.

Private developers have responded to that demand by providing new build for sale, but they are building primarily at the higher end of the market, where the profits are greatest. The result is that those at the lower end of the income scale are, increasingly, being squeezed out at both ends by the reduction in the available stock of social rented accommodation and by property prices that are outwith their affordable range, even if they wished to buy.

House prices in some parts of north-east Fife are comparable with some of the most expensive parts of Scotland. For many years, there has been very high demand for housing in the ancient city of St Andrews in particular, and the St Andrews effect is spreading to many other parts of north-east Fife. According to the Bank of Scotland house price index, house prices in Cupar, for example, rose by more than 50 per cent during the year ending in March 2004. The average price is now more than £130,000, which is 20 per cent above the Scottish average and 40 per cent above the average for Fife.

For many young couples and families who are looking for their first home in local communities, such prices are simply unaffordable. They are forced to look elsewhere and often have to move away from their families and communities simply to get a roof over their heads that they can afford. The alternative of renting is simply not available. Outwith St Andrews, to which I will return, there is no significant private rented sector. Council house sales have meant that, for most families, nor is there any realistic prospect of council or housing association rented accommodation.

Right to buy was imposed by the Conservatives not as a housing policy, but as a policy of social engineering. It was about imposing a Conservative ideology, not about ensuring that we had the right balance of housing by tenure and type. I am not ideologically opposed to the right to buy, but the way in which it was implemented by the Conservatives was a disaster. Implementation of the policy was indiscriminate and uncontrolled, and it led to the best houses in the best areas being sold first, often to be sold on as second homes or for student lets. Housing authorities were not given the powers to ensure that an appropriate balance of social rented accommodation was retained in communities. The policy was underfunded, leaving tenants to meet unpaid debts and the costs of sorting out the poorer-quality housing stock from the reduced rent

base, and leaving councils unable to replace much-needed rented accommodation.

In north-east Fife, more than half of the council housing stock has been sold and that has led to pressure on the remaining stock, which cannot meet need. For example, in St Andrews there are only 957 council houses left out of 2,053. Already more than 50 per cent of the allocations in St Andrews are made to homeless applicants. It is virtually impossible for anyone who is on the general needs list—those without special needs—to get housing in St Andrews.

The problem in St Andrews is exacerbated by the purchase of properties for letting to students. I do not suggest that students do not have a legitimate housing need, but the increased student population has certainly added to the pressure on housing in the town. St Andrews is also a popular place for retirement, no doubt because of the excellent rates that residents get if they want to play golf on the St Andrews links.

Indeed, the whole east neuk of Fife is a popular place for retirement and holiday homes. More than 60 per cent of second homes in Fife are in the east neuk, and 98 per cent are in north-east Fife. The growth in the number of holiday homes has put many of our communities under strain. Holiday homes contribute to the upward pressure on house prices and they reduce the amount of accommodation that is available for permanent residents, which can put at risk many of the vital community services that are needed to sustain rural village life. If there are no homes available for young families, there are no children for our local schools. Post offices, village shops, pubs, bus services and community groups are all at risk when there is not a sustainable permanent population. In many communities in north-east Fife, such as Kingsbarns, Crail and Earlsferry, that is already a real concern. The indefensible discount on council tax for second homes must end so that second home owners make a fair contribution to sustaining local services. The money that would be raised could even be used to support essential new social rented housing in these communities.

Other parts of north-east Fife, such as Cupar and the Howe of Fife, have come within commuting distance not just of Dundee and Glenrothes, but of Edinburgh. That, too, has put pressure on house prices in north-east Fife.

Affordable housing has become a real problem in north-east Fife and I am pleased that the recently published local housing strategy for Fife has recognised that. North-east Fife has nearly 20 per cent of all housing in Fife, but it has less than 14 per cent of social rented housing. We also have the greatest requirement for affordable housing, with an estimated shortfall of more than 3,000

units compared with a net requirement for Fife as a whole of just 712. The present funding from Communities Scotland, averaging 270 units per annum across Fife, would barely scrape the surface even if all that investment were made in north-east Fife, which it is not.

The proposal to include in the Fife structure plan a requirement that 30 per cent of all housing in developments of more than 10 units will have to be affordable is to be welcomed, but it will have little impact until the later years of the structure plan. Further, what is meant by affordable? Is £100,000 affordable? That is what is being suggested for some developments in St Andrews. Will that proposal ensure that there will be an appropriate balance of tenure types, social rented homes, private rented homes, rent-to-buy properties and low-cost purchase properties and the right mix of house types and sizes? How will it deal with the problems in our smaller communities that might require only one or two social rented units?

The right-to-buy policy will continue to make it difficult for the Fife housing partnership fully to address those issues unless north-east Fife is recognised as a pressured area. I welcome the fact that north-east Fife has developed a case to apply for pressured-area status and I hope that the Scottish ministers will look favourably on that application if it is received. I also welcome the commitment in the housing local strategy to complete an updated housing needs and affordability assessment and to update and develop the rural housing plan.

Those actions are welcome, but they do not guarantee any additional affordable housing. What is needed is resources. North-east Fife needs investment in social housing if it is to start to address the shortfall of more than 3,000 affordable housing units. I urge the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland, Fife Council and the Fife housing partnership to make a commitment to that investment.

17:21

**Mr Ted Brocklebank (Mid Scotland and Fife)**  
**(Con):** There are housing shortages in north-east Fife, as there are in many parts of Scotland, including the capital city of Edinburgh. The problem in the case of St Andrews is exacerbated by the growing number of students, but it is not as straightforward as Mr Smith's motion suggests. While it is true that many town-centre properties are now occupied by students, several university residences have spare capacity; indeed, some of the older residences have been sold off to the private sector because many students no longer wish to live in dormitory-type accommodation.

However, just as there are many parts of Scotland that have problems with affordable housing, there are parts—including some in central Fife—in which there is spare housing capacity. Statistically, some of the most affordable housing in Scotland is in the Leven area, only a few miles from north-east Fife.

On a recent visit to Mountfleurie Primary School, I was interested to learn that the Edinburgh overspill is now spreading to places such as Leven and Buckhaven. The standards of local education are excellent and, with attractive coastal villages such as Lundin Links and Lower Largo nearby, the quality of life for young professionals who are choosing to commute to Edinburgh is obvious.

The same pattern is true elsewhere in the UK. While some areas are overheated and have a shortage of affordable housing, there are other, less-desirable, areas in which that is not the case. While John Prescott claims that Britain needs 2 million new homes, at least 800,000 homes—a quarter of which are owned by the public sector—are lying empty. The Government argues that population growth has caused greater need for more houses, but Scotland appears to be haemorrhaging people. Our problem is not that we need more houses, but that we need different kinds of houses, perhaps in different places.

I have some problems with Mr Smith's contention that many people cannot obtain affordable accommodation in their own communities. I am not sure how we would define what would constitute people's own community. I believe that St Andrews is my community, since I was born, brought up and educated there, but why should that guarantee me affordable accommodation in the town? It seems to me that, if I cannot afford to make my home there, I should live elsewhere. That is exactly what I did until I was able to afford to come back and live in St Andrews.

I remain unconvinced that Fife Council's latest major vision to help to alleviate Fife's affordable housing crisis will do anything of the kind. Building affordable housing is a laudable ambition but it is fraught with difficulties, especially in places such as St Andrews, where the pressures of the marketplace quickly turn affordable houses into houses that people simply cannot afford.

The right approach is to help people to afford to buy the houses that are available, and that means shared equity. People who are determined to live in the area of their choice might not be able to afford 100 per cent of a house, but they might be able to afford, say, half or two thirds of the price. By working with the lending industry, builders and local authorities, an equity revolution could allow millions of people to get on to the property ladder. At a time of their choosing, those people might or

might not decide to buy over the whole equity. To improve the standard of housing for everyone in Scotland, it is necessary to devolve control of housing from councils to local housing associations, housing co-operatives and a range of other providers. That would give tenants a real choice of landlord and a real say in the management of their homes. The right to buy should be extended to the housing associations, creating a more fluid housing sector.

The end of council housing should be welcomed, as such provision has been characterised by unsympathetic and unresponsive bureaucracy and financial waste on a massive scale. We need management that will face up to its responsibilities to control and, if need be, evict antisocial and disruptive tenants.

The land that we need to free up for any necessary housing developments should, in the first instance, be brownfield land. In that connection, I see real potential in the Guardbridge area, which is only three miles from St Andrews. That could provide both major housing and light industrial development, if required. Building on greenfield sites has doubled under Labour. As a member of the local green-belt forum, I am dedicated to preserving the natural setting and environment of St Andrews. That does not mean that there should never be further development in the town, but we have a responsibility to ensure that we do not destroy the very qualities that make places such as St Andrews attractive to home owners and visitors alike.

We must recognise that in St Andrews we have Scotland's most intact medieval city and its original ecclesiastical capital. We have a national responsibility to protect and preserve that for future generations. For that reason, I am opposed to the application of any short-term measures to solve a perceived housing problem that may just be a problem of people failing to go to other places to find houses. If they wish eventually to return to St Andrews, why should they not do so, as I did?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Richard Lochhead. I am sorry—I call Tricia Marwick.

17:26

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** I have my other glasses on, but the last time that I looked I was not Richard Lochhead.

I congratulate Iain Smith on securing tonight's debate. I know that it is customary in such debates to thank and congratulate the member who has secured them, but on this occasion my congratulations are genuine. This is a very important debate and I have never heard Iain Smith speak better in the chamber.

Although we are right to focus on north-east Fife, we must recognise that a shortage of affordable housing is a problem in rural areas throughout Scotland. Average house prices have risen—as Iain Smith said, prices in Cupar have risen by more than 50 per cent in the past year alone. It is not the case that St Andrews, in particular, is becoming unaffordable; housing is unaffordable in many areas of north-east Fife. If house prices in Scotland had increased only by the rate of inflation since 1975, the average price would be £48,000 lower than it is.

Throughout Fife, house prices are rising at an unprecedented rate, partly as a result of the fact that prices are so high in Edinburgh. Because people on modest incomes are unable to buy in Edinburgh the kind of houses that they want, we are seeing a ripple effect throughout Fife. As Iain Smith rightly said, that extends all the way up to Cupar. The parts of Fife that have access to a mainline railway station are the areas in which house prices are rising. Perhaps we should consider the dispersal of jobs from the likes of Edinburgh to places such as Fife and taking jobs to where people are, because at the moment those people are commuting to Edinburgh for jobs.

People are moving into Fife and into West Lothian, where house prices are much lower. To the mix of reasons for the rise in house prices, we must add the fact that the number of council houses is decreasing, because houses have been bought under the right to buy and not replaced. I say to Ted Brocklebank that it is clear that, after all these years, the Tories have learned nothing about housing and the housing market. It is not good enough to suggest that people can go away and come back.

**Mr Brocklebank:** I did it, and I was born in a council house.

**Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** It is absolutely bizarre.

**Tricia Marwick:** It is. I appreciate Keith Raffan's intervention.

Local authorities, including Fife Council, have a statutory duty to house people. The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed new duties on local authorities. At the moment, many local authorities are struggling just to meet their statutory duties, never mind to house people with general needs.

The Executive has undertaken a review of affordable housing, which lasted until April 2004. When the minister sums up, it will be useful if she speaks about the review, its timetable and its outputs. As Iain Smith recognised, the strategy that Fife Council has developed will be only a piece of paper until the council gets the resources

that it needs to ensure that there is provision of affordable housing. There is only a small rented housing sector in north-east Fife—I refer to both council and private rented accommodation. As Iain Smith said, there are fewer than 1,000 council houses in the whole of north-east Fife.

Houses are being built that cost more than £100,000. Few young people can afford to buy such houses and people on average incomes are simply being priced out of the market. Many young people live with their parents for longer, because they simply cannot get into the housing market. The shortage of affordable accommodation and the fact that housing is not available in the right place at the right time are particular problems in north-east Fife, because of the number of second homes there, but they are also problems throughout Fife.

Ted Brocklebank is right. There are areas in Scotland in which there are surplus houses. Frankly, however, the surplus houses are in places where jobs do not exist and where people do not want to live. It is not just a matter of saying that there are houses on a council estate somewhere and asking why people do not go there to live. We must provide the houses where the jobs and the people are.

17:30

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** Members might wonder why I am speaking in the debate, but I know something about St Andrews because I went to university there and I have two daughters currently at the university. From personal experience I can vouch for the fact that the accommodation situation in St Andrews is critical. If we consider it from the students' angle, accommodation is extremely expensive. There is a syndrome whereby wealthy parents buy houses and then let them through agents, which removes them from the market. The number of students who seek to go to the University of St Andrews is not helped by a certain royal effect, although the prince is very welcome in Scotland.

To look at the situation the other way round, part of the solution might come from the fact that more students in second and third year at the university go into rented accommodation than go into university accommodation. Perhaps a structural approach could be taken to the situation. The university has the Andrew Melville hall and other large halls. If those spaces could be increased, that might encourage students to stay longer in halls. That might not work, but it is worth being considered by the minister.

Much as I respect and pay heed to what Ted Brocklebank says, I found his comments rather

strange. If I understood him right, in essence what he proposes is that the devil take the hindmost and, if someone comes from a poor background in St Andrews, they have no choice but to go and live in Leven or somewhere else. I have to tell Ted Brocklebank that a similar situation prevails in a rather similar community to St Andrews called Dornoch, which is built around a great golf course.

When I was leaving church in Dornoch last Sunday, people spoke to me about the problem of young people trying to get accommodation there. The situation is exactly the same as it is in St Andrews. People are buying into Dornoch partly on the back of the Inverness effect, which is a bit like the Edinburgh effect in Fife—prices are shooting up. However, as we all know, people are also buying for the postcode. If someone gets the right postcode, they can get on the waiting list for the Royal Dornoch Golf Club.

I say to the minister that some of the solution lies in the following areas. I am aware that, when council houses are sold now, the capital receipts can be used to build or repair a council's housing stock or to build new stock; it is not just a matter of paying off the housing debt. Further, more local authorities can borrow at their own hand. Of course, that power is related to what their debt profile looks like.

Let us compare the current situation with the old days. Those of us who were district councillors know that there were two sorts of funding: block A and block B. Block A was for public rented housing. The fact is that the capital that is available to the 32 Scottish local authorities today, combining capital receipts and borrowing, is a fraction of what it was in the 1980s and early 1990s. That issue is beyond the Executive's remit—ultimately, it is about the Treasury and the public sector borrowing requirement—but funding for council housing might have to be considered at a national level.

I say to Ted Brocklebank that the issue is not just about private versus public. With imaginative planning and the use of what used to be called block B funding, local authorities can work with the private sector on low-cost home ownership schemes and the sale of plots at a discounted rate to which various legal terms and conditions are attached. In parts of Scotland, those methods have been, and are being, used imaginatively. More of the same would go down well. Housing does not necessarily have to be in the public sector. I have seen low-cost home ownership work well.

I congratulate Iain Smith on securing the debate. He outlined succinctly the housing situation in St Andrews, as I understand it, which is paralleled in many other communities in Scotland. There is no easy solution to the housing problem, but it can be

tackled on a number of fronts, including by considering the student accommodation situation in St Andrews.

17:34

**Mr Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I thank Iain Smith for securing a debate on this important topic. I will comment briefly on three aspects of affordable housing: first, housing prices; secondly, the existing stock in St Andrews and north-east Fife; and, thirdly, how we should approach new housing development in Fife.

On prices, Iain Smith was right to mention the Bank of Scotland's Scottish house price league, in which the bank describes its best performers. Members will be delighted to hear that Cupar is, apparently, one of those best performers. It is in third place, with an average house price of £127,000, representing a rise of almost 50 per cent between 2002 and 2003. Such good performance might be good for sellers who are getting a windfall gain when they sell their house—an untaxed windfall gain, I might add—but it leads to the gap between the rungs on the property ladder getting wider and wider. That poses a special difficulty for first-time buyers who are trying to take their first step on to the property ladder.

We do not want to create a situation anywhere in Scotland that mirrors the situation in London, where public sector workers in effect are being driven out of London and have to live miles and miles away and spend most of their lives commuting in from vast distances. We need to consider innovative ways in which we can start to put a slight brake on housing prices in Scotland. I would be interested in examining land value taxation as a way of slowing down the acceleration that we are seeing in housing prices.

My second point is about the existing stock in St Andrews. There are a large number of empty second homes, and I agree with Iain Smith that it is wrong that those second homes are not taxed. It is also wrong that there are empty brownfield sites that have been earmarked for development but are being land-banked by property speculators. Although it is not a panacea, LVT could be useful in that respect, because by taxing those second homes, we could see them going into the private rented sector. If brownfield sites were taxed, that would provide encouragement for those sites to be developed.

My third point is about new housing development. I am pleased that Fife Council has included affordability as one of its sustainable development indicators, which is vital. I should perhaps declare a small interest, as I was briefly the subcontractor working on developing Fife's sustainability indicators in the mid-1990s. It is

important that Fife Council has also established a new percentage for the amount of affordable housing that must be part of any new housing development. That is an important step forward. We need to ensure that new development is both environmentally and socially sustainable.

How we get sustainable housing developments in north-east Fife is a matter of planning, but it is also a matter of design. If members want to see good, ecological social rented housing, they should go to Perth and have a look at the Fairfield Housing Co-operative's houses there, which provide an example of fantastic ecological design. If they want to look at ecological housing developments, they should go to West Lothian, where the lowland crofting scheme has enhanced the environment in the local area. That scheme was designed to bring more high-end rateable value housing into West Lothian, but there is absolutely no reason why such a scheme could not be used in north-east Fife to stimulate low-cost housing, including self-build housing.

We need to consider ways of keeping prices in check. Let us slow down the acceleration of housing prices if we can. Let us examine ways of ensuring that our existing stock of housing is used and that land that is earmarked for development is used. Let us ensure that, where we build new housing developments, they are based on principles of good design. As part of that, let us consider how we can use LVT as a tool to start to address the issue.

17:39

**Murray Tosh (West of Scotland) (Con):** I am grateful to Iain Smith for giving us the opportunity to discuss an important issue, and also for his statement at the outset that the debate is about housing in areas such as north-east Fife, because the issues that he identified affect many comparable mixed rural and suburban areas. I am sure that he would agree that the solutions for north-east Fife can be found not in isolation but in policies that will address the needs of similar communities in similar situations across Scotland.

I want to make three points on what I think has to be done. The first relates to Tricia Marwick's point about the review of affordable housing. We need to have a debate on quantitative issues—on the need for units, on the need for money, and on how objectives will be established and financed.

Secondly, we want to hear less from ministers in the months to come about relying on research such as the Glen Bramley research that has been conducted for the Executive and which analyses these issues council by council and so does not have the subtlety to measure the needs of areas—such as north-east Fife—that lie within local

authority areas. I was pleased to hear Iain Smith say that the local housing strategy had identified particular needs within Fife Council's area.

Thirdly, I want to raise some issues that I feel are pertinent from Scottish planning policy 3, which is entitled "Planning for Housing". The document, although not material in planning inquiries, sets out the basis of the Executive's policy. It contains an interesting section on affordable housing, but the section is disturbingly vague. It talks about meeting need in "areas" but does not define especially clearly what those areas are. It refers to "development plans" and "local housing strategies". Those plans and strategies are documents that councils frame to set targets for their areas. SPP3 does not say for affordable housing, as it does for marketable housing, that the needs of each area must be met locally. It says that needs should

"where possible be met within the housing market area".

However, housing market areas are not local authority areas. There might be several housing market areas within one local authority, and some housing market areas cross several local authorities. There is no mechanism for allocating the spatial requirements for land supply—the numerical requirements—between one council and another. If, in a market-led economy, there is a clear difficulty in providing market land in Lothian, for example, it can be agreed that some of that land can go in the Scottish Borders Council area and a deal can be negotiated between East Lothian Council, West Lothian Council and Midlothian Council. However, on the basis of the planning guidance, that cannot be done in the rented sector. There is no mechanism for that, and no requirement that each council must identify and then meet the need within its own territorial boundaries. Much less is there a requirement that councils should do that on the basis of a local assessment of housing market areas and—crucially—the sub-market areas.

It is by such an assessment that we can say that demand is emerging in St Andrews or anywhere else, or say that 20 to 30 per cent of the local population will not be able to find a market solution to their housing needs. The alternative to meeting that demand is the financial cleansing of areas such as St Andrews: in effect, we say to 20 to 30 per cent of the population, "Go away and live somewhere else." That has never been the housing policy of any British Government, it is not the housing policy of the current Executive, and it is not a policy for sustainable communities.

We need a debate on how to identify and then meet local needs. We have to provide the land and the financial resources that are necessary to sustain the 20 per cent of people who need rented housing and the 10 per cent of people who need

some form of assisted home ownership—those figures are the Scottish averages; the figures for north-east Fife might be different. We have to do that on a local basis and on a housing market and sub-market area basis.

17:43

**Richard Lochhead (North East Scotland) (SNP):** My only connection with St Andrews is that, as a teenager, I used to go to the caravan park on holiday. I therefore come to this debate as an outsider—I represent North East Scotland—but I very much welcome the fact that Iain Smith's motion gives us all an opportunity to talk about the rural housing crisis.

There is a crisis in the lack of affordable housing. One of the biggest disappointments in the Executive's track record over the past five years is that we had a rural housing crisis back in 1999 and here we are in 2004 and the rural housing crisis has not improved, but has got much worse. We have not had any political leadership on this issue. It is about time that the Government got the bit between its teeth and came up with some radical proposals.

The Parliament must also do more. My understanding is that no in-depth committee inquiry has been carried out into rural housing or affordable housing. Our committees should look into that. Far too many communities in rural Scotland spend years and years trying to get round the convoluted obstacles that prevent the building of more housing in those communities. We must get round these obstacles or demolish them—that is what political leadership is all about, but it has not been delivered during the past five years.

I was a member of the Rural Development Committee for the four years of the first session of the Parliament. We undertook many inquiries into the obstacles to rural development and we visited communities and spoke to young people in Lochaber, in Galloway and upper Nithsdale and in Huntly in Aberdeenshire, which I represent. The young people would say, "The difficulty in this community is that local people like me cannot get a house. We have nowhere to live, so we will have to leave and find a job elsewhere, unless we want to sleep on a relative's floor or settee."

That scandalous situation continues and we must do something about it. I am so frustrated when I speak to young people in our communities who cannot afford to live and work in their own communities, where they want to live and work. The age profile in Aberdeenshire, for example, is zooming upwards because people retire to Aberdeenshire and young people cannot afford to live there. Deeside has many problems that are

similar to those of north-east Fife. People are simply priced out of the local market and that is reflected throughout the country.

Land reform legislation did not go nearly far enough in relation to access to land. We have to consider how people can get land. The situation could be resolved if more homes were built—it is as simple as that—but we need land on which to build them. Why is it that local authorities hardly ever use compulsory purchase orders? We should investigate that and make it easier to secure such orders. We should give communities the power to buy land on which to build housing for rent or ownership. We must remember that the debate is about owning accommodation as well as renting it; people should have the right to buy a house in their local communities and not just an opportunity to rent affordable housing, however important that is.

Infrastructure has not been mentioned to any great extent, but it is crucial. There is a chronic lack of infrastructure, which relates to the underfunding of Scottish Water, not just over the past few years but over decades, if not the past century or so. That must also be addressed. I received a letter from Scottish Water in March in response to a letter in which I asked the company why it is not doing more to put in place the infrastructure for affordable rural housing. Scottish Water told me that changes that the Executive made to the funding mechanism in the year 2001-02 took away the company's ability to put aside money for infrastructure for building houses in rural communities. Once again, the buck stops with the Executive, which made the situation worse in relation to the expansion of infrastructure for rural housing. Apparently that situation will not be addressed until after 2006.

There is to be a review of planning, which is crucial, but we must not forget design. Currently, strapped authorities such as Aberdeenshire Council are planning to bulk buy houses. If they get their hands on land, they will build as many houses as they can as close to each other as possible and as cheaply and quickly as possible. That makes the planning situation worse, because people object to the building of more ugly houses in the countryside. It is a chicken-and-egg situation; if we do not build nice quality housing people will object to plans to build more houses.

We need political leadership from the Executive. We have waited five years for that.

17:48

**Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** I congratulate my colleague Iain Smith on obtaining this important debate on affordable housing in north-east Fife.



North-east Fife is, of course, part of the wider region of Mid Scotland and Fife, which I and Mr Ruskell represent. As Mr Ruskell knows, north-east Fife is just one of several serious pressure points—if one can use that phrase—where there is a desperate need for affordable housing.

I recently attended a meeting of the Perth and Kinross forum—I think that Mr Ruskell was there, too—which is a quarterly meeting between Perth and Kinross Council officials and members of the Scottish Parliament. I wish more local authorities ran such meetings, because the forum is very useful and enables us to learn in detail about local problems. One of the most worrying presentations that we heard in recent months was about affordable housing in Perth and Kinross. I remember that we were shown a map that demonstrated how the situation had deteriorated during the past 10 years. Ten or 15 years ago, the lack of affordable housing was concentrated in highland Perthshire, but the problem has spread to eastern and western Perthshire. The Executive must address that major problem, which affects several parts of the region that I represent.

I agree with the analysis of the problem that several members have made. There has been a rise in the number of single households, retirement homes and second homes—perhaps those are examples of the prosperous economic situation of the past 10 years or so. The right to buy has particularly contributed to the problem. I feel somewhat responsible for that, having formerly been a Conservative member of Parliament. The main problem with the right to buy is that there was no replacement of the housing stock that was sold off. I agree with the rather restrained comments that my colleague Mr Smith made criticising the former Conservative Government for the uncontrolled way in which it allowed the right to buy with no follow-on policy of replacing the housing. That resulted in the serious situation in which we find ourselves today.

Several members raised ideas in the debate in response to the situation that we face today. I agree with the suggestions that were made, including those that called for an end to the council tax discount for second homes. I believe that we have to develop further the whole idea that 30 per cent of new developments should be affordable housing. That said, we need a definition of affordable housing.

I agree strongly with the points that Richard Lochhead made about Scottish Water, which had not been made previously in the debate. There are serious problems in Perth and Kinross with Scottish Water. The problems, which relate to connecting up new developments, are delaying the building of new housing, some of which is affordable housing.

We need to look at land value taxation. I am glad that the Greens have come around to what is a good Liberal Democrat policy of old—it was espoused by James Davidson, the excellent member of Parliament for West Aberdeenshire back in the 1960s.

We have to be careful about infrastructure, too. I am thinking of the scale of uncontrolled development of the sort that is to be found around Dunfermline and Dalgety Bay—which is the biggest single housing development in western Europe at the moment—and of its impact on the Forth road bridge, to give just one example. Infrastructure, community facilities and transport links are all important.

The response to the motion that we did not need was that made by Mr Brocklebank. There was a touch of the Marie Antoinette in what he said: “Let them eat cake. Go away, make money in television, buy a Jag and drive back to St Andrews.” Basically, all that can be said about that Tory’s be-like-me approach is that it was bizarre and out of touch.

I am glad for Mr Brocklebank’s sake that Murray Tosh was in the chamber for the debate, as he was able to haul Tory policy back to the borders of sanity in his vaguely reasonable speech. I promise that Mr Brocklebank’s comments will find themselves under every single door in north-east Fife. The Tory vote will plummet yet further, although it has not far to go.

17:52

**The Deputy Minister for Communities (Mrs Mary Mulligan):** I congratulate Iain Smith on securing the debate this evening. Housing is an issue that is discussed constantly in the Parliament; indeed, it is a subject each and every member discusses on a daily basis. All of us feel that it is an important issue as far as providing for our communities is concerned. The debate is a worthwhile one, albeit that it is not the best-attended debate that I have attended.

The Executive appreciates the housing pressures that exist in north-east Fife. It is clear that north-east Fife is recognised as a high-demand area. We can see the priority that it is being given in both Communities Scotland’s “Lothian, Borders and Fife Housing Market Context Statement” and Fife Council’s recently completed local housing strategy.

The purpose of Fife Council’s local housing strategy is to achieve for Fife and its local housing markets exactly what Iain Smith called for, which is to have in place a comprehensive housing strategy that responds to all the concerns that he raised this evening. That is why the Executive introduced that requirement on local authorities in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Communities Scotland and Fife Council have agreed that north-east Fife is a priority area for investment in new-build affordable housing. That means that the area will be a priority area for the £8.5 million a year development funding that is available to Fife Council through the Communities Scotland programme.

I was pleased to learn that Communities Scotland's investment in east Fife is projected to increase by as much as 80 per cent. That increase is a recognition of the difficulties that members have highlighted this evening.

**Murray Tosh:** Does planning guidance require Fife Council to zone sufficient land to meet that need? If it does not, does the Executive intend to amend planning guidance in order to ensure that local authorities identify need and set out policies to meet it in their planning strategies as well as in their housing strategies?

**Mrs Mulligan:** My understanding is that Fife Council is developing its planning strategy, which will be put out to consultation soon. Of course, within the planning strategy, it would be logical for the council to examine the policies that it has already looked at through its housing strategy, to see where it can provide for that housing strategy. We have to give our local authorities some credit, because they do not operate two different streams but instead recognise that without providing in their development plans the land that is needed, they will not be able to satisfy their housing strategies.

**Murray Tosh:** I thank the minister for that response, but does she accept that some local authorities with new local plans do not have that policy and therefore do not carry that approach through? Does she further accept that the planning guidance issued by the Scottish Executive does not require them to take that approach and that in some areas of Scotland that is a real difficulty?

**Mrs Mulligan:** We are talking specifically about rural housing development. I am conscious that we are consulting on housing development in rural areas for the very reasons to which Murray Tosh's colleague alluded. We recognise that with developments in rural areas we must retain the character of the area but also answer the needs of the people in the area. We are aware that we have to bring those two strands together. I have more confidence in our local authority colleagues than perhaps Murray Tosh has. I want to make progress, but I will come back to Mr Brocklebank, because I did not miss his criticisms of local authorities.

I was encouraged to hear that Fife Council is currently undertaking further work to update its existing local needs assessment to uncover the

extent of housing needs throughout Fife. That work will be important in informing the best way of delivering the local housing strategy. While north-east Fife has a particular set of housing issues, there are general concerns about shortages of affordable housing in other parts of Scotland, so they are not unique to Fife. I will come on to speak about some of the general things that we are doing in the housing review and answer the questions on timing that Tricia Marwick posed. First, however, I will pick up on a few points that members raised in the debate.

Iain Smith recognised that the solutions to housing problems need to be adapted to particular circumstances. We have a rural policy, but we have to recognise that different settlements will need different solutions. That is why in our housing review we have tried to involve as many people as possible. Iain Smith said that there is a problem with the fact that more than half of the rented housing in Fife has been sold, but I am aware that Fife Council is considering applying for pressured area status. That may assist the council in some ways, but I have to be realistic and say that pressured area status would apply only in relation to new tenancies, so there is a limit to how effective it could be. However, it would be another step along the way to addressing the situation.

I am also aware that Communities Scotland has commissioned research on the effect of second and holiday homes. That will be useful in a number of areas where there is a preponderance of such homes that affects the local market and supply. We need to respond to that situation more effectively.

**Richard Lochhead:** While holiday and second homes are important, does the minister accept that the underlying problem is the lack of homes? We should not be targeting holiday and second homes as the number 1 priority, however important they may be, because the main issue is that we have to make more land available so that more housing is built to address the shortage.

**Mrs Mulligan:** I understand that it is a question of the overall number of homes. However, I also recognise that the underlying problem, which we need to address, is that there are different influences in each area. There are different circumstances and different demands for different types and sizes of housing. That is why the review will not just say that we need however many thousand extra homes in Scotland but will actually look at addressing the needs of individual communities.

I am aware that the Presiding Officer is looking at me, although I have not got through even half of the comments that members made. I will make a couple of quick comments on important matters that have been raised.

The first such matter is that of empty homes, which Mr Brocklebank raised. We recognise that there are empty homes in some areas of Scotland. The housing strategies that are being prepared will consider how to utilise those homes to best effect. However, I disagree with him that the answer is to move people from areas in which they want to live to fill those homes. We cannot do that—we must be a bit more strategic and responsive than that. I hope that we will come up with more positive solutions.

**Mr Raffan:** Will the minister give way?

**Mrs Mulligan:** I am sorry, but I am running out of time.

The Executive's affordable housing review is considering the issue of shared equity. We have had discussions with various funding providers to try to develop such schemes. From listening to one of the Tory housing spokespeople on "Newsnight", it is obvious that the Tories are still at the talking stage as well. Perhaps we will all learn something that will benefit people and allow them to access housing at rates that they can afford in the areas in which they wish to live.

We are bringing the housing review to a conclusion. We have spoken to a host of people who have an interest in providing affordable housing, whether to rent or buy, in the areas in which people want to live. We must listen to those views. We will produce ideas about how to address the clear demand, but it is not productive simply to pull numbers out of a hat, which has been the habit in the past. We must consider the underlying demand and work to address the issues. There are examples of good approaches to free up land for affordable housing. Mr Lochhead might be aware that we allocated forestry land in the north-east of Scotland for housing development. That is an example of the Executive working across departments to provide land for housing in an area in which there was a shortage. We need more such imaginative ideas of how to provide land and affordable housing for our communities.

*Meeting closed at 18:03.*



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