

Government Orders

Iraq knows it has to go, but stands defiant against the currents of international condemnation. By the time Iraq uses up supplies in its country, it will still take about a year for the sanctions to take their full effect. Analysts have confirmed this to be so. I do not support the ultimatum that says, unless Iraq withdraws, it will be forced out with tanks, fighter jets, bombs, and who knows what else.

Canada has not given the sanctions enough time to work. We keep hearing, how long? We heard it from the Secretary of State for External Affairs. We heard it again from the Minister of National Defence. How long? I screamed out from this side of the House "as long as it takes". The minister said: "What if it takes two years?" Well, what if it takes two years? Is it worth the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals? We know that is a possibility. We know that the U.S. is going to embark on an air strike. We hear through our television sets and the national news from the United States that that is the way they have to proceed and they would rather not use ground troops. They say: "Let's get them from the air. Let's get them from the sea".

In a Toronto newspaper today, Canadians read the Prime Minister's statement that sanctions are working. The Prime Minister said yesterday that "we seek to defend the interests and the integrity of the United Nations and that we seek to assist in the deterrence of aggression". A curious statement. The Prime Minister, if I have this straight, seeks to assist in the deterrence of aggression with the threat of aggression. Is this Canada talking? No, this is the U.S. talking, a country that has been badgering other nations of the world to fall into line.

In our new and modern world of instant communications and new found democratic freedoms, world-wide war, or even the threat of war, is not the answer. In fact, the prevention of war is one of the founding goals of the United Nations, and I will get to that in a moment.

The trade-offs have been enormous. One day, not a month ago, the Soviet Union's Mikhail Gorbachev declared that time should be given for the sanctions to work. After pleas to the U.S. for aid in helping to stave off a looming famine, Gorbachev is now onside. Such delicate diplomacy usually takes weeks, but the trade-off was made.

China, disgraced by the actions taken at Tiananmen Square, now holds the trump card. As a permanent member of the Security Council, and therefore with a veto over any decisions taken by it, China has promised something, too. Will the American sanctions imposed on China after Tiananmen be lifted, resulting in China abstaining tomorrow. Not vetoing the resolution tomorrow, but abstaining at tomorrow's meeting?

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The Secretary of State for External Affairs proclaims, that although he does not like deadlines, he and the government are prepared to back the American call for an ultimatum. Why? The U.S. loses its presidency at the Security Council on Friday, so it wants to push ahead, full steam ahead. But should Canada be prepared to act so hastily?

Canada should be at the forefront of diplomatic efforts right now, not abetting those who would go to war. As the pot is about to boil over, Canada is right there turning up the heat. Should Canada follow along in that pressure-cooker atmosphere of American politics and agree to an early date for a military strike against Iraq? No. There has been no decision and no debate, despite what the Prime Minister says. He and his Conservative government are prepared to support the ultimatum, to go to war, needlessly.

An hon. member: What are the Liberals talking about? Appeasement.

Mr. Keyes: The hon. members asks if the Liberals are talking about appeasement. No. We are asking that we continue the resolutions of sanctions, that sanctions can and will work if given time.

The Conservative government has reached the limits of its absurdity. The Prime Minister rules by Order in Council. He has divorced Canada, for the sake of cosying up to the United States, from our traditional role in international diplomacy, that of occupying the middle ground, not because we are too weak to occupy any other place, but because we were interested in the welfare of international peace and security.

What has happened to our traditional role, our peace-keeping role? In this situation, Canada has lost that golden opportunity to exercise its influence on the other nations which make up the Security Council.