

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

PERSIAN GULF CRISIS

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Resolution 678 of the UN Security Council authorizes member states to use all necessary means, including a military offensive, to get Iraq out of Kuwait after midnight this evening.

Since the Prime Minister and his government supported this UN resolution, is the government preparing for a Canadian military offensive to get Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait? Is Canada going to war with Iraq? Yes or no, Mr. Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in my speech this morning I mentioned two important elements in connection with the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition. First, the Canadian government was going to explore all existing possibilities for a durable peace, between now and midnight, between now and the expiry of the deadline. That has not changed.

Second, the government has also announced what governs the behaviour of our military, and there have been no changes so far. This morning I mentioned that the Government of Canada, failing a peaceful resolution in the form of acceptance or a signal from Saddam Hussein that he intends to observe the provisions and the resolutions of the United Nations, failing that, the Canadian government intended to join other countries that support the UN in order to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

[*English*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that Canada would support the United Nations if force is used to get Iraq out of Kuwait. But there is no United Nations military operation. It is the United States that will be leading the military operation.

When the United States goes to war with Iraq, will the Prime Minister order young Canadian men and women into war as well? Will Canadians be going to war in the gulf?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend, inadvertently, no doubt, commits a very serious mistake in regard to his interpretation of resolution 678 because he persists in quoting but two paragraphs of the resolution.

The resolution demands that Iraq fully comply with the resolutions. Second, it authorizes member states to use all necessary means to uphold it. And third, it requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions taken, namely actions taken to uphold and implement—

Mr. Axworthy: Not requires, requests.

Mr. Mulroney: No. My hon. friend is saying that it does not require. No. It does not require. The United Nations makes a specific request in the resolution asking all member states to act to uphold the integrity of the United Nations and Canada will do just that.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the Prime Minister that is exactly what is being debated here. We say that it is not the time for war and that there are other means such as sanctions, embargoes, and diplomacy.

The question I am asking the Prime Minister is, will Canada be at war against Iraq if the United States starts the war tonight at midnight?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: The Leader of the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I think all hon. members realize the importance of the issues that are before us. This morning the conduct and behaviour of members was for the most part exemplary, given the very serious matters that were being discussed. I am sure that all hon. members would want to ensure that matters being discussed here are treated with the gravity which they deserve and that the courtesies which are traditional in this place be carried out.

The right hon. Prime Minister.