

*Government Orders*

I have a letter from another gentleman and, again, I will not give his name, starts off by saying, "While the leaders play ego, the innocent pay with their lives in the Arabian gulf. What I am seeing and hearing in the news has driven me to come out of my silence and share a side of the story of Iraq that has been totally ignored. I will speak for the innocent Iraqis. I defected from Iraq over 10 years ago and came to Canada. I do not have any empathy with the ruling regime but I certain do for the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people have barely survived, over 20 years, under the oppression of the ruthless leadership of Saddam Hussein. I have chosen Canada as my homeland for it represents the principles I hold dear. I feel that those ideals are being betrayed by the present Canadian government. One of the reasons I chose Canada was because of its even-handed approach and tolerance in dealing with international problems but, by aligning ourselves in a wartime stance, Canada and the Government of Canada is violating that stand".

• (1810)

This is from a Ken Toews from Nepean. "I am writing to express my dismay at our involvement in the escalating war in the Middle East. I agree that Saddam Hussein is an evil man. There have been many invasions in the past 10 years where more people were killed and brutalized worse than the Kuwaitis. The Americans did not get involved. The reason? They did not have an economic reason for it. Perhaps if we had not sold the Middle East so many arms they would not be fighting this war today."

This is from Jean Godt, also from Nepean. She says: "Eventually we are going to have a peace conference in the Middle East and we will have to address many of the demands Hussein and his supporters are making. So, why not bypass the war and have the peace conference now rather than satisfying the war-mongering hawks in the U.S." Doesn't that make sense? It is so simplistic. Let's have peace, forget about the war and sit around a table and talk.

This is from Caroline Fitzpatrick of Nepean would like to have more talks about peace and less about war. She says: "The resolution of the UN did not say go to war. Give sanctions a longer try." "Appalled at the thought of going to war", comes from Isabelle Muir. Leslie Arnold says: "Only supportive of war if UN votes to go to war and the UN has not voted to go to war". This is contrary to what someone said earlier here today.

Having prepared a 20-minute speech and now being told I have to make a 10-minute speech, I am having to jump a few pages. I would like to speak about who is going to win in this war. I do not think that anybody is going to win. Surely, it is not going to be us as Canadians.

There has been no clearly defined national Canadian interest in attacking Iraq. Iraq is not the winner, not with the military build-up that is set against it. It would be obliterated. Israel would not be the winner in a war if Iraq is attacked. Saddam Hussein has promised to launch a massive strike against Israel. Surely Kuwait is not the big winner if a war breaks out because it would, in all likelihood, be the scene of the hard fought, bloody trench warfare.

The Secretary of State and other government members opposite have suggested that we should participate in war against Iraq because of the human rights violations perpetrated by Saddam Hussein against the people of Kuwait and indeed his own people. We have seen this man wage one of the bloodiest wars in history against Iran. We have seen him conduct ruthless experiments with biological and chemical weaponry on his own people. We have seen him mercilessly gas the Kurds. The international community has been hesitant in the past to condemn his actions, perhaps because members of the international community have had an agenda in which Saddam Hussein and his oil played the major role.

As my colleague, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, so eloquently pointed out in an earlier speech, all of us can carry some of the blame for the present situation. The world community has helped supply Saddam Hussein with the very weapons which he could well turn back on to us. What goes around comes around. What is the hurry now for Canada to enter a war without first giving sanctions and diplomacy a proper chance.

The government has suggested that sanctions, if given proper time, will not affect Hussein, because he will starve his own people before shortages would ever be allowed to reach his troops. They like to use the imagery of starving children. I have heard this argument over and over again. In other words they say, rather than starve the people, let's go in there and blow them all to kingdom come. I guess this is going to be a more humane way for these children of Iraq to die. This is absolute nonsense.