

this continue under the blue flag and with the blue beret of the United Nations in this area.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the last point with which the parliamentary secretary dealt with respect to the assurance that Canada is playing an active role at the Security Council in an attempt to bring this operation in the Middle East under effective United Nations command.

I know that the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated that he was urging the United States not to take unilateral military action in the region but rather to ensure that any additional moves that are taken are within the context of United Nations.

Given the fact that the subamendment which my colleague, the leader of the New Democratic Party, moved urges this House to agree "that Canada work at the Security Council to seek assurances that no country will undertake offensive military operations against Iraq unless they are under UN command and explicitly authorized by the Security Council".

I would hope, given the assurance of the parliamentary secretary, that in fact he would be prepared to indicate that he and his colleagues are prepared to support this subamendment since this is precisely what has been indicated as the government position at the United Nations.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary whether, indeed, he does support the thrust of the sub-amendment because, as I say, it indicates that Canada would work toward this as an objective.

Second, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary the same question I asked the member for Northumberland. I know he will not give us a Mackenzie King answer because he has just condemned that. What is the position of the Government of Canada with respect to a longer term regional resolution of the very serious questions concerning the situation of the Palestinians in the Middle East? Does his government support the convening of an international conference with the participation of all affected parties in the region, including the Palestine Liberation Organization? If so, is he prepared to make a commitment that Canada will work toward achieving this objective?

Government Orders

Mr. Boyer: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway on his recent appointment to the position as External Affairs critic for his party and answer both his questions, dealing with the last one about a conference first.

Yes, we would support the holding of a conference in the region to bring the outstanding issues to some resolution. We think it is important that the representation of those attending such a conference be equitable. We think that the agenda for the conference ought to be clearly defined in advance of the meeting taking place so that there can be a fairly specific indication of the issues to be dealt with and the approach to them.

As to the timing of it, this would obviously be determined by the judgment of a number of players in the region, a number of countries and the United Nations, as to what would be the appropriate time to get this under way. Speaking for the Government of Canada, it is our view that the earliest possible opportunity should be seized for this.

The situation with which we are preoccupied involves primarily a military confrontation, but Canada has never pursued its role as a peacekeeper simply in one dimension. We have sought, apart from any military role, the two other avenues of diplomatic initiatives and overseas financial assistance and development programs and so on. On the diplomatic side Canada is quite open and would be supportive as to how this could be done. I think that is a clear statement of the government's policy.

With respect to the resolution that is before the House and the New Democratic Party's subamendment to it, I agree with the NDP critic that the general spirit of what is there is consistent with what I have been saying. I recognize the sometimes devious nature of the hon. member in trying to deal with parliamentary points. Everyone understands that when resolutions are drafted and amendments proposed to them, there is some effort to catch members in an awkward position where they may have to vote against their own views or the policy of their party. This is something that is understood as parliamentary games. Consistent with what I said to the hon. member for Northumberland, I do not want to deal with it on that level. I am trying to look at Canada as a peacekeeping country and where we can go in the broad