

Government Orders

The overriding principle of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security through collective action. The most fundamental principle of the charter is article 2, paragraph 4, which prohibits the use of force in international relations, especially aggression against the territorial integrity of any state.

Article 2, paragraph 5, requires all the members of the United Nations to render assistance to the organization in actions which it undertakes under its authority.

Article 25 stipulates that the members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. The House approved the charter and Canada's membership in the United Nations with all the obligations that entails by a motion passed on October 19, 1945, shortly after the birth of the new organization.

What this House is discussing today is no more and no less than the fulfilment of its obligations under international law and specifically under the charter of the United Nations to which Canada has committed its full support.

Prime Minister St. Laurent said in this House in 1950 in connection with the Korean action: "the whole prestige of the United Nations has been committed. It is not only the fate of South Korea that hangs in the balance. It is the fate of the United Nations, the fate of that organization upon which the hope of peace in the years ahead now rests."

To put it simply, this is an exercise in law enforcement. It is a repudiation of those such as Saddam Hussein who attempt to take the law into their own hands in an effort at the collective enforcement of the most fundamental principles of international law.

[Translation]

In brief, the authority and the legal responsibility really exist. Everybody knows that superpower rivalries have always harmed the general objectives of the United Nations charter. The first hopes were dashed, but the situation has evolved and new opportunities exist. The fundamental principle of non aggression on which rests the United Nations charter could not be fully applied unless members states agreed to honor their solemn commitment to collective security. We all must be ready

to defend our principles and to assure the security of innocent and law-abiding peoples.

[English]

Let me conclude by assuring this House that every step the Canadian government takes in this matter will be in strict conformity with both the Canadian Constitution and international law.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that I quoted Prime Minister St. Laurent speaking about the important implications of the Korean action and this country's participation in it. That was the last time that the United Nations was capable of acting in a concerted way to enforce international law. It happened because one of the countries that traditionally vetoed the motions of the Security Council which would have permitted that action happened to be absent from the Security Council on that day. The action in Korea was able to take place only because of the absence of a member of the Security Council.

It has been 41 years since the United Nations has been able to take concerted actions in the Security Council and to pass unanimous resolution upholding the rights of international law and upholding the action of United Nations against aggression. It should not be another 41 years before the United Nations can do that. It is a very important time in its history, and I strongly support Canada's participation in this action.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask the hon. minister a very brief question.

Inasmuch as I have heard this type of speech on several times this evening, would she tell this House if it is her understanding that a positive response to the resolution means in fact that the government will engage in armed intervention without further consultation with Parliament?

I will accept a very brief answer; a yes or a no will do.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, our troops that are in the gulf now and have been there—

An hon. member: They are not in armed conflict.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): The troops that are in the gulf to fulfil their obligations under sanctions have always been in a position where they might have to engage in combat. They are vulnerable and, if they had been attacked, they would have had to respond.