

*Government Orders*

in 1977 Iraq's Armed Forces stood at 188,000 and that barely 10 years later this number had risen to over one million troops.

Professor Stein contends that in the few days and weeks prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the Americans played a very dangerous game of what she terms deterrence and reassurance, that is to say the U.S. government sent conflicting messages to Iraq about how it would react in the event that Iraq invaded Kuwait. She cites U.S. defense secretary Richard Cheney's comments to journalists on July 19 of last year that America was committed to come to the defence of Kuwait in the event of Iraqi invasion. Only five days later on July 24, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department remarked, and I quote: "We do not have any defence treaties with Kuwait. There are no special defence or security commitments to Kuwait". Only the next day the U.S. ambassador to Iraq reportedly said to Saddam Hussein personally: "we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts like your border disagreement with Kuwait".

Many have contended that Saddam Hussein miscalculated how the world, and specifically the United States, would respond if and when he invaded Kuwait. Madam Speaker, it seems he may have had some help from the Americans in this regard.

I want to emphasize again, however, that I find any armed aggression on the part of one country against another totally unacceptable. This is especially true of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, more so when one looks at the atrocities committed by the Iraqi invasion. Nonetheless, our conduct in international relations, and particularly the conduct of the United States, has to be by virtue of its power and the responsibilities it holds absolutely above reproach.

I fear we have not all been lily-white in this. Neither has the United States, and by extension, neither have we. We must all share a portion of the responsibility for events as they have transpired, although none more so than Saddam Hussein. The government's willingness to support the Americans wholeheartedly in whatever they do, something they have demonstrated over and over again, is frustrating and ill-advised. I think it is one of the major reasons why our government has failed to

provide a more constructive role in the quest for peace in the Middle East.

The government has been far too caught up in the international game of brinkmanship to realize that we are plunging headlong into war.

Madam Speaker, this is not our war. But now that the war is here, we shall not shun it. Let us be clear about how this war came about. Let us be equally clear in stating that this could have been avoided, perhaps as early as last August.

No one has successfully made the case that sanctions were not working, particularly given the horrible consequences of resorting to war to achieve the desired effect of Saddam Hussein's ultimate withdrawal from Kuwait, given enough time. The imposition of the January 15 deadline was premature. I fear that the government's support of that deadline was shortsighted, that by doing so, Canada has forfeited a great deal of its credibility as a peacekeeper and as a peacemaker.

Whoever is to blame, there is no denying that war has arrived with a vengeance. Early signs of optimism have to be kept in perspective as we witness rumblings of discontent throughout the Arab world; as we see on our television screens tonight the terrible bombings of Israel; as we start to see the extent of the damage inflicted by the initial bombing of the multinational force and of the missile attacks by Iraq on western targets.

The Palestinian factor is still a grave threat to regional security. It is doubtful whether Saddam Hussein has been crippled to the extent which most of us would like to believe.

Therefore, the quest for peace must continue. The point of this war is to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Yet we should remember that there is still room for diplomacy in achieving that goal. In fact, diplomacy is essential if we are to find any of the long-term solutions to the problems that exist in the region and which have been aggravated over recent days.

Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait will be but the first step on the long road to peace in the Middle East. Thus, this government has a unique opportunity to redeem itself as a peacekeeper; as a nation which still will go the extra mile for peace.