

another alternative available and when there was another course of action that could be followed?

I support the United Nations. I do not believe there is a person in this House who does not support the United Nations. The reputation that Canada has had where we can accomplish peace without the resort to war would perhaps be an even better testament to what it is we do here in this House.

I am going to close by saying that during this debate we will discuss all kinds of matters, but we will essentially categorize them in time, as they did in congressional hearings. We will quote many people, from Winston Churchill to Theodore Roosevelt, and you name it. We will be talking about the histories of the past with the passions of today, but I believe we should do it with the concern for the possible tears for tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception on his excellent speech. It differs from speeches made earlier by some of his colleagues.

In the course of his speech he said at least three times that he was not against the use of force. I realize he is a retired rear admiral. He was a member of the Armed Forces at a level very few people reach. Since his rank was the equivalent of a general in the army, if I am not mistaken. He is therefore well aware of the capabilities of the Canadian forces.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I was amazed that in his speech he seemed to doubt the ability of our Canadian officers to command our troops in the gulf. I found that somewhat surprising because I went to the gulf, during the week of November 11. I had conversations with army regulars, but I also talked to senior officers. I saw the kind of equipment they had, the quality of their training and their motivation. At no time was there any doubt in my mind about the ability of these officers to command our soldiers down there, or about the ability of the men and women we have in the gulf to fulfil their mission. I would appreciate it if he would clarify that part of his speech.

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Furthermore, when he says that we have not explored all avenues, I wish he would tell me what avenues Canada has failed to explore so far.

Third, Canada which was instrumental in involving the Americans and the Soviets in recognizing the power of the UN as a common force. For the first time in the history of this organization, in the history of our planet, did he mean that 32 or rather 34 countries, if I am not mistaken, which are involved in the gulf, were all making the same mistake? Are the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party the only ones with a clear view of what should be done, of what the UN should be doing in the gulf?

[*English*]

Mr. Mifflin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his point of clarification and his follow-on question. I am delighted to respond to it.

I would like to say at the outset that I am disappointed and almost upset that the hon. member, with whom I have worked very closely for the last two years on the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs would circumscribe the comments to portray what he thought they meant. I also want to say at the outset that there is nothing further from anything I wanted to suggest or anything that I said, I believe. I have the greatest faith in and pride in the Canadian forces.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I am not alone when I say that our young men and women, our officers and our leadership are if not the best in the world, among the best in the world. We have demonstrated that time and time again in NATO operations. Our air force comes out on top. Our maritime command quite frequently wins the trophy for anti-submarine warfare. Our ships in NATO exercises almost always come out on top. Our land forces are well known for their professionalism in NATO exercises.

I am under absolutely no reservation. There is not one element of reservation in my blood that would give me any cause for reservation of leadership and the ability to command within the Canadian forces. That is not the point.