

Madam Speaker, the question, although it may now have become somewhat academic, was whether together with the United States and other countries, we were in favour of declaring war against Iraq. That raised and still raises objections from Liberal members. However, Madam Speaker, it is more or less water under the bridge, since we have already passed that stage.

[*English*]

Regrettably, in my opinion, there has now been a military aggression. War has been initiated, and I deplore that. Regrettably again, our country has decided to participate in that war. But, now that that is done, I think it is incumbent upon all of us to support the forces that we have sent over there, even though I am not one of those who thought that it was a good idea to send our forces into active combat to start with. That is done and we cannot, as far as I know, undeclare war, regrettably.

What we must do, then, is support our forces. I think we must pray that our forces will be spared casualties, that this situation will not last any longer than it has to, and that our troops will be able to come home as soon as possible.

I want to return to this whole business of sanctions and why my colleagues and I thought that was the proper avenue to follow, even though of course, as I say, events have overtaken them. Canadians still have a right to know what it is that we thought was the appropriate course for our nation. We believe that diplomatic channels could have continued their work. We also believe that the trade embargo could have continued.

In response to a question by the member for Winnipeg South Centre, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said in the House of Commons yesterday, I believe it was, that there was no proof the trade sanctions had their desired effect. The minister was asking the opposition to demonstrate proof of that sort. The question was backward. The Secretary of State for External Affairs should be giving us proof and should have given us proof prior to the military action being launched that the trade sanctions had not worked. That proof was never provided to members of this House or to Canadians generally.

William Webster of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, not one of those folks known to be a dove, said less than two months ago before the U.S. Congress that 90 per cent of Iraq's imports and 97 per cent of its

exports had been stopped. Has that changed since then? If it did, by what measure did it change? What is the proof that it has changed? Why was that proof not given to me and to our colleagues in the House of Commons? Why was that not shown to us prior to the military decision being taken? I do not know the answer to that questions.

James Schlesinger, former secretary of defense of the United States, said that we needed approximately a year for the trade sanctions to work and to be able to identify how they had worked. Why is it, then, that all of that advice, again not from people who are known to be peace activists, was not followed?

I want to remind the House of a speech made in the United States Senate on January 10, 1991, in which Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts said the following:

I urge the Senate to vote for peace, not war. Now is not the time for war. I reject the argument that says that Congress must support the President, right or wrong. We have our own responsibility to do what it is right, and I believe that war today is wrong.

Similarly I say to our colleagues in Parliament who are supporters of the government that they had the same duty; that the argument for members across the way to support the Prime Minister, right or wrong, is itself wrong; that we have the responsibility as well to do what is right. I wish that they would have agreed with me that the declaration of war itself was wrong.

In the few moments I have left, I just want to indicate that the Canadian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and a group in the United States calling itself the U.S. Centre for Defence Information have warned that the casualties from this war could be indeed quite severe. They talk of casualties including deaths of some 200,000 people and indicate that 80 per cent of them could be civilians.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I would like to say, in the few minutes I have left, that I hope the statistics are all wrong, not because parliamentarians enjoy being proved wrong but because I hope those lives will be spared. I also hope, and this notwithstanding my objections to this declaration of war, that now that war has been declared, our military forces will be spared and that they will all come back from the Persian Gulf, without exception. It