

*Government Orders*

First, I cannot accept that our government sent Armed Forces into this crisis in the Middle East without recalling Parliament so that we could have full debate on the issue and an understanding of what the circumstances are in the Middle East. I also condemn the fact that the Government of Canada sent our forces into the crisis in the Middle East two weeks in advance of any UN resolutions which would have required their presence there. Rather, we sent forces into the Middle East crisis in response to an American request.

In terms of the motion that is before the House today, I cannot deny for a moment that I support fully the first comments in the motion which are:

That this House condemn the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and, encouraged by the unprecedented international consensus demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the full restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait, affirm unequivocally its support for Canada's actions in the United Nations Security Council and its support of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted since August 2—

That, I support fully.

I have to say at the outset that I have the highest regard and respect for Canadian Armed Forces now serving in the Middle East or who have served in the past in other areas of the world, and the greatest respect for those many people in Canada who have lost their lives in serving the cause of justice and freedom on behalf of all Canadians. But I am quite alarmed that the purpose of our Canadian Armed Forces seems to be changing radically from that which Canada has represented in the past decades.

It is ironic that yesterday here on the Hill we had the unveiling of a statue of a very highly respected Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, a man who won the Nobel Peace Prize, who was present when the United Nations came into being, who was so outspoken in support of this country being involved in dialogue to resolve crises world-wide, and who made this nation so respected in our peacekeeping role. Suddenly, it seems to me that we are diverting from this traditional role in Canada and that we are willing to set that aside, become regressive and take on an offensive role.

Our government has not done sufficient to carry on a process of negotiation to try to bring the crisis in the Middle East to a peaceful resolution. Lives of Canadians are being put in jeopardy.

To describe in some detail what I am referring to, I think it is important that Canadians understand that in the Middle East presently there are two operations in place. The Americans have two different strategies for resolving the crisis which are being hotly debated in the United States. Again, as I say, Canada has two possible positions, one to maintain our traditional role in peace-keeping and being strong advocates as negotiators, or the role of going in, forgetting about strong diplomacy and negotiating positions, and being prepared for offensive action.

In terms of the operations in the Middle East, I totally support our Canadian Armed Forces, with all of the skills they have, and their presence in the Middle East to support United Nations resolutions. From that perspective I can support the role of our Armed Forces, the three ships and equipment, and the CF-18s that are in the area, so long as they are employed only to support UN resolutions.

The second operation that is taking place in time in the Middle East is as a result of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait calling upon governments around the world, Under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, asking for nations' support in resisting further invasions by Iraq, particularly into Saudi Arabia. The U.S. and over 26 other countries around the world, now and over the past weeks, have been building up troops and military equipment deterring aggression but also putting us in a very vulnerable position in terms of an unplanned offensive act on the part of any of the participants. The activities and build up of those troops and equipment on the Saudi Arabian border are not as a consequence of any UN resolutions but they put us in a very volatile situation, one which puts at risk Canadian lives if there is one mistake. I believe that we, as Canadians and as Parliamentarians, should have had the opportunity to debate more fully exactly what the strategy of Canada is in this crisis and to have urged, as is our traditional role, much more dialogue and negotiation as a process to bring about peace to the Middle East situation.

• (1130)

Personally, I cannot support any action on the part of our government which directly numbers and counts the loss of Canadian lives in the strategy. I believe that the strategy of peacekeeping is no less difficult and requires no less strength than that of offensive military action. I believe that the difference between the clenched fist and the open hand exists in the mind of the person who holds