

Government Orders

If we did not accept our share of the burden in support of such measures, we would not be living up to our obligations as founding members of the United Nations. I remind the House that over 25 members of the United Nations, I think it is, have now committed forces to this operation, nine of them Arab countries. Was it really possible for us to do less?

Can we abstain from participation in a multinational effort that has drawn support from Third World countries, the economies of which are already stretched to the limit? Can Canada shirk its responsibilities when Bangladesh has not?

I submit that it is imperative for Canada to assist in enforcing the ground rules of a new international order. We will have this new order, this new era of peace, but only if it is supported and strengthened by all civilized nations including Canada.

I know that hon. members will join me in asserting that only such an important fundamental cause could ever justify the use of the dedicated members of our Armed Forces.

Canada now has close to 950 officers and non-commissioned members serving aboard our ships as part of the Operation Friction Task Group, including 29 women serving on the HMCS *Protecteur*. As well we have some 550 personnel deployed in support of our CF-18 operations including 40 women. These men and women are living proof of our nation's determination to stand up and be counted when the deterrence of aggression and the preservation of peace are on the line.

Of course we hope and pray that war will not break out, that the economic sanctions supported by multinational military deployments will prove sufficiently effective to deter further aggression and persuade Iraq to comply with the wishes of the United Nations.

If wiser counsels do not prevail, Mr. Speaker, the House can be assured that our service men and women have the protection that technology and their own professionalism can provide. They are equal to any task that will be demanded of them, and they have the comfort and ease of conscience that comes from knowing that they are serving in a just and noble cause—the pursuit of a lasting peace and the elimination of violence between nations.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in supporting the motion before the House and ask colleagues from all sides of the House to join me in that support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments. I will recognize the hon. member for Victoria, the hon. member for Saint-Denis and then the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question of the Associate Minister of National Defence. I look forward up to a point to working with her over the next period of time. I hope I can make her life at least politically miserable, and I do not intend that personally in any way, shape or form. I am sure at that level we can work very well together if the past is any indication.

I would like to ask two questions of the minister. The first is whether she will give this House a clear and unequivocal commitment that Canadian troops will not participate in any military action in and around the Arabian Peninsula that is not authorized by the United Nations Security Council. That is the first question.

The second question refers to her comment about a peace dividend. I heard her say that we should not anticipate a peace dividend. Now, I am a bit puzzled on that because I woke this morning to *The Globe and Mail* telling us that the defence minister has warned the defence industry that financial constraints will mean further cutbacks in the size of Canadian forces.

We know that last month 1,400 troops were cut from the 8,000-member force in Europe and sources have told *The Globe and Mail* that there will be a further reduction of 5,000 to 15,000 troops, much of the reduction coming from troops in Europe.

I would like to ask the minister whether the time has not come for some really creative thinking on the part of the Department of National Defence and of the government in this area.

We were down in Washington on the CSIS committee and we heard more creative thinking from the CIA than we hear from the Department of National Defence when it comes to a genuine peace dividend.

We no longer need our troops in Europe and the government should be proceeding to plan open and above board for the withdrawal of all troops from Europe. They provide no military service. They provide no political significance now that the CSCE is being