

"Saddam Hussein has threatened to attack Israel with weapons of mass destruction. In the face of extraordinary provocation from Iraq, as evidenced by Foreign Minister Aziz's deplorably aggressive threat last week, Israel has demonstrated remarkable restraint. Should Saddam Hussein move against Israel, would we still hold ourselves back in the hope that we would be called in later to help keep what's left of the peace in what's left of the Middle East? This course is a prescription for neither wisdom nor responsibility and it is not a course that Canada should follow."

Those, Mr. Speaker, were my thoughts last week. Most leaders around the world shared the view I conveyed to the House. Just hours ago Saddam Hussein unleashed another unprovoked attack on innocent civilians in Israel. Men, women and children in Israel have become targets in the lethal shelling of that nation by scud missiles fired from Iraq. Among the reasons that this government stood firm last week when the critical hour came, and will continue that policy until victory is won, was that we had resolved never to remain silent and indifferent while Israel was threatened with death and destruction. History has shown both the folly and the immorality of that course, and I know that this Government and all Canadians will shun it for the appeasement it is. This war is about fundamental principle and about the kind of world we must create.

There is no evidence that sanctions were achieving their objective -- the withdrawal of Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait. In fact, our experience with sanctions over the last five and a half months was far from encouraging. There is no doubt that the Iraqi economy was being affected. Imports and exports were heavily affected. Rationing had become more widespread. Prices for some goods had increased dramatically. Some factories were closed. But we also know that some foodstuffs and commodities were getting through the embargo. And that during the period when Saddam Hussein was reducing rations to his own people, he was increasing the rations for his army. Would the world have persevered with sanctions and would the coalition have held if Iraqi and Kuwaiti citizens starved while Iraqi forces sat tight in Kuwait?

This is a man who inflicted the ultimate sanction on his own people -- perhaps a half-million casualties in an eight-year war with Iran that he, himself, started. This is a man who used gas in war and who turned it on his own citizens. This is a man who took tens of thousands of people hostage. This is a man who is using rockets to attack civilian population centres, not military installations. This is a man who violates the Geneva convention abusing prisoners of war and threatening to use them as human shields to protect his weapons.

Since we last debated the Gulf crisis in November, we have all been able to make a better assessment of this man. Knowing what we know now, there cannot be many of us who still think that sanctions alone would have stopped him. It might have been possible to believe that when we first debated this crisis in September or even in November. But there cannot be many of us who are confident of that judgement now.