

*Government Orders*

is no doubt about that. They are also unquestionably having an impact on economic conditions and living standards within Iraq. Iraqi oil production is down substantially. At the same time, there is clearly leakage of foodstuffs and components through the embargo.

• (1150)

[*English*]

An appropriate question is, how much time will it take for sanctions to work: six months, sixteen months, sixty months? Obviously, no one knows. The essential point in regard to sanctions that we all must remember is that Saddam Hussein has demonstrated limitless tolerance for the suffering of his own people.

This is a man who put his nation through eight pointless years of a war that took almost a million lives. It was so pointless, in fact, that in August he gave back almost everything that he had gained from that eight-year war with Iran in order to purchase Iranian neutrality in this particular conflict to make sure that he was not attacked from another flank. Eight years of extraordinary suffering and devastation inflicted on two countries, hundreds of thousands of young lives lost, and whatever was gained was turned back in an instant to procure the neutrality of somebody who might attack him while he was engaged in attacking an innocent Arab neighbour.

While industrial production is down substantially because of shortages of imported goods, Saddam Hussein will always ensure that the Iraqi armed forces are guaranteed the absolute top priority to key commodities. He will not hesitate, as the evidence of history clearly indicates, to pass on any amount of suffering and deprivation to his own people. Their well-being and security is clearly the furthest thing from his mind. But there is no evidence that sanctions have caused a groundswell of public discontent.

In fact, there is no reason to believe that the sanctions are having the desired effect at all. The desired effect is not to inflict damage on the armed forces tomorrow morning, but to get Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait by tonight. His objective is different from ours. We want him removed from Kuwait and he very much wants to stay there.

There is every reason to believe, based on his most recent statements last night and this morning and confronted with the extraordinary resolutions of the United Nations, that he has not the slightest intention, at least not so far, to indicate that he will respect and honour the commitments of the United Nations. He is determined to stay. He shows every sign of trying to out-wait the international community in the hope that events sooner or later will split the United Nations coalition.

Given the volatility of world affairs, especially in the Middle East, his gamble might very well work. In weighing the arguments in favour of using force, it must obviously be conceded that the risks and costs of a war are literally incalculable but that they would certainly be substantial in lives and resources. How risky and how costly would depend on a number of factors. How long would the war last? How strongly would the Iraqi forces resist? Could war be limited to the Iraq-Kuwait theatre or would it spread? How much damage would the environment sustain?

These are fundamentally important questions which I acknowledge. Unfortunately, there are no firm answers from anyone anywhere to these questions at this moment.

But while we concern ourselves and properly so with these questions, we must also guard against the tendency to regard waiting as cost-free. The fact is that there are also absolutely incalculable costs to waiting. The destruction of Kuwait continues unabated. An entire nation is being systematically dismantled and destroyed before our very eyes and human rights abuses continue at a pace and on a scale with few precedents in modern times.

Furthermore, the international economy is being damaged, and the poorest people in the Third World are the most affected. The funds that are paying for a massive military presence in the gulf are not available to the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe, with potentially critical consequences for their futures.

And all the while that we wait for sanctions to work, the Iraqi defences become increasingly formidable. If it requires hostilities to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, the costs in terms of casualties among the coalition partners, including Canada, probably increase with every day and every week that passes. So, while a war is certain