

*Government Orders*

It is a different way than the way we would have chosen, but they are fighting for peace. We hope that they will be very successful in a very short order.

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, our first thought tonight, like all Canadians I am sure, is for the men and women who are in the Middle East and the families of those men and women.

It is surely, whatever one's opinion is, a great tragedy for Canada and for those people. It does not in any way undermine the fact that they are there, that war has become a reality and that our thoughts and prayers are with them.

[*Translation*]

My party and I are proud of the contribution made by Canadian men and women in the Middle East to enforce the sanctions against Saddam Hussein and Iraq. Tonight, our thoughts first of all go to them and their families.

Now a state of war exists. It demonstrates the full extent of our failure as politicians. The world has gone mad. We should not share Saddam Hussein's folly. One does not fight madness with madness.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** Mr. Speaker, we agree that Saddam Hussein must be stopped. The new world order under which we thought we could thrive is being jeopardized by a tragic war. This is our first test since the last world war and we have failed miserably.

[*English*]

When I say "us", I do not just mean anyone in this House or any particular world leader, but as a world community. I think we can all agree that this is a failure.

It has been said that sometimes the first casualty of war is the truth. I have to say this with honesty, and perhaps others may share this feeling.

It is a feeling of betrayal for those of us who had hoped that economic sanctions would be given a chance, that there would be a true commitment by all world leaders, that all diplomatic efforts would be tried, and that war would be considered only as the last resort after all of these measures had been exhausted.

I have said it in other debates, Mr. Speaker, so I will not repeat it here, but we do not, as a party, agree that all those efforts were exhausted before this measure was taken—but, there is a war.

Today, in fact, our party unanimously supported an amendment to say that we should not participate in an offensive action against Iraq and we maintain that position.

I still believe that rather than saying Canadians should step aside, we should see what role we can really play—a role that would leave open the options not to not participate, but to participate in a meaningful way. Canada is a compassionate nation. We should exercise that compassion through our humanitarian work, through the kind of work that we see as being most useful to further the peace effort.

It is not a question of abdicating responsibility. It is a question of taking that responsibility in the most useful way possible, in the way that would lead to peace.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** I share the comments of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition that we support our troops who are there. Of course we do. Of course our hearts are with those troops. Of course we feel that they are in danger and that we want to see the best for them. We want them to return home.

We hope the predictions that have been made about a long war will not be true. We would be quite happy to be proven wrong in this event.

The question is: how best do we support those troops? I would have to say, that in my view, the party's view, we support those troops by making sure that they are employed in actions that will truly show that Canada, as a compassionate nation, is prepared to participate, not within the theatre of war, but rather in a compassionate and humanitarian role for both civilians and non-civilians.

That is not non-participation, just as participating in economic sanctions was not non-participation. Let us be realistic that that view will not prevail. But I want to state clearly that that is our view.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** I wish to speak directly to those men and women, those young people whose lives are so directly affected by this from coast to coast to coast. I speak to those people who have spoken out about their