

Government Orders

The parliamentary secretary suggested that the issues raised in the speech of the member for Northumberland were nuances in the debate and not central to the point. I think they are central to the point. I think Parliament has a very important role to play in Canadian foreign policy. We have a long tradition of having good discussions on foreign policy and there is a goodwill among Canadians that we do the right thing. Whether it is in areas of human rights, peacekeeping or dealing with nuclear disarmament, this House has spoken at times with one voice to ensure that Canada proceeds in the proper way.

The absence of Parliament sitting during the summer was not just a minor nuance to us but in fact is central to our criticism of what the government is doing and central to our criticism of the motion.

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could elaborate on why the government has not been more insistent that the command of this military operation—because it is a military operation—is not more directly in the hands of the United Nations. We have, as a middle power, consistently taken the position that it is organizations like the UN which have to be the vehicle for keeping peace. Although we appreciate the speed with which people have to respond to the crisis with the dangers that are there—and nobody kids themselves about that and the goodwill with which we have supported the United States—the point still is that other countries turn to Canada to make sure that organizations like the United Nations are front and central in these missions.

It seems to me that the government could have done more to ensure that the United Nations was in control of this particular operation. I would like the parliamentary secretary to explain exactly why this was not done and what efforts will be made in the future.

• (1210)

Mr. Boyer: I did not refer to any nuances in the speech of the hon. member for Northumberland. I said I was concentrating on the broad lines of what is happening in historical patterns and that I did not seek to enter into a debate as to the chronology of certain events or the timing of the debate within Parliament. However, I welcome the question of the member from Winnipeg. He and I studied questions of international relations

when we were both students at Carleton University, it seems just the other day. In fact, it was in the mid-60s.

I want to pick up on this point about the current initiative of Canada in relation to the United Nations. First, the Prime Minister, in his discussions with the President of the United States as this matter developed during August, played an important role in driving home the point to the American government that any action they took in the region ought not to be a unilateral American initiative but rather ought to be a United Nations enterprise. I think this is something that has not been known generally, but it is a fact that this was a very important effort and those of us who recognize how the United States responds in international crises would detect over the long view of history a tendency to go in alone and deal with the situation according to American interests.

The Prime Minister, and I say this very proudly, displayed a good use of his good relations with the American president in urging that this become a United Nations initiative.

I would also draw to the attention of the member from Winnipeg, in case he was not here to hear the Secretary of State for External Affairs speaking on September 24 in the House, a quote from page 13246 of *Hansard*:

We have encouraged our close allies, we have encouraged others, and we have used our influence and our position on the Security Council to ensure that the action that proceeds is action that is within the mandate of the United Nations and, indeed, that the mandate given by the United Nations expands to take account of the circumstances as they develop in the region. We are working very hard to have United Nations' auspices respected.

That was a statement in the House on Monday by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Further in reply to the member, our Minister of National Defence also said in the House of Commons on Monday that both the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs, and I quote from page 13261 of *Hansard*:

—are working toward and imploring the United Nations to put a blue flag over the whole of the multinational effort.

Certainly Canada wants this to be and be seen as a United Nations effort. That is the whole thrust of Canadian foreign policy. It is consistent with the policy of previous governments and I am sure will be the policy of future governments of our country. We were there at the creation of the United Nations. We are there now at this time of testing for the United Nations. We want to see