

Government Orders

I would submit to you that if we continue with embargoes and if they are as effective as they have been, and continue to be, then the possibility of a nuclear device will be hopefully no closer in six months, eight months, or four months, than it is right now.

What I am saying really is that before we resort to the use of force, we must measure the effect of going to war is going to have on this world, the Persian Gulf and this country. There are all kinds of reservations I have about the very business of going to war. I have a lot of questions. I asked one of the Minister of National Defence today.

My first question, is Canada ready for a war? My hon. colleague from LaSalle—Emard asked the question about the preparedness for war in the sense of civil and domestic aspects. I listened to the answer. I am not sure that I am convinced that we are ready.

I do not have evidence, despite the question I asked of the hon. Minister of National Defence in Question Period today, and despite some private notes that we sent back and forth, precisely what is going to happen to Canada's force in the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, if offensive action breaks out. Who is going to control our force? There is no United Nations structure. There is no United Nations force commander, as there was in the case of Korea.

As you probably know, Mr. Speaker, General McArthur was the first United Nations force commander. Who is in charge of this operation? This House has not been told who is going to run the operation. These are reasonable questions. I am not being partisan. We deserve to know the answer. If the answer is unclear, perhaps we should not be rushing into the kind of conflict that we are getting involved in.

There are many other aspects of this. There is the aspect of what effect does moving into a war now have while options are still available for peace? What effect will this have on the economy of the world? I hear talks about oil at an outrageous price. Nobody knows for sure, but the figures are astounding. They are talking about \$50 to \$90 for a barrel of petroleum in the near future. What it means to us in the streets who buy gas is anywhere from 70 cents to \$1 a litre in a short timeframe. That is not the driving force, but it is a consideration.

So the question I am asking myself, and the question I am asking the decision-makers is: Have we sat down and thought out all these implications and the implications of the wins, or the gains, and the losses, or the cost, by the course of action that we take. When I do that analysis with the information that I have, my judgment is that we should wait.

• (1740)

I am told by military colleagues and by people who are in the business that there is a window for attack. The closest window I guess is 45 days, and the far window is next fall. I am not in a position to make the judgment on how that window should be used because I do not have the information. The Minister of National Defence, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Prime Minister have at their disposal the intelligence information—to the military expertise that they get from the Departments of National Defence, External Affairs, and others—on which they can base these decisions.

Unless they have information that we do not have on this side of the House and unless they have information from the United Nations other than the unclassified information we have, I am not sure why the decision is being made the way it is being made. There are other alternatives available.

I said that I was here feeling somewhat humble and with a great pride at being able to do what I am doing, to get up and speak in the House on this. I also have great pride in the Canadian forces. They have sacrificed their way of life to be away from their families, especially at Christmas time with the future looking bleak and uncertain and with the thought of war. The unpredictable nature of what is going to happen in their lives is so much more close and so much more constant and a part of their very being and indeed their families than perhaps others who do not face this on a 100 per cent basis do.

I ask myself another question. It has been asked in the congressional debates in the United States that if there were congressmen and senators who had sons and daughters serving in the military, would the vote have been the same. I cannot answer that question. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker. To those who are voting and making the decisions, I say: Ask yourself one question: Would you make the same decision if you had an immediate relative whose life would be put on the line when you believed in your heart of hearts that there was