

Oral Questions

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people remember that this same minister who is defending this action under the United Nations auspices is a minister who said three months ago that he did not give a damn whether the UN would support us or not; he would go to war anyway. They do not care about the United Nations.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary question is directed to the same minister. The minister has told us that he finds the French peace initiative interesting and positive. It is a fact that economic sanctions and diplomacy should be given more time to work to avoid a catastrophic war. My question to the minister is very specific: Has the Canadian Government contacted all Security Council members, including the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union to encourage them to support the French initiative to avoid a catastrophic war?

• (1450)

[*English*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in the first part of his question the member for Burnaby made an accusation which is false, which he knows is false, and which the record of the standing committee will demonstrate is false. I certainly am prepared to stand on the record of the standing committee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I rather regret that he is not following the reasonable approach that was taken by his leader in her speech today when she spoke of the importance of keeping this issue something we discuss on its merits and in a manner free of partisanship or of pettiness. I would hope that he would follow her lead.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): As to the second part of the question, I can confirm that we are in contact with other members of the Security Council, including France, the United Kingdom and the United States, to determine whether the French proposal has a probability of success. But the reply that matters is not that of the United States, but that of Saddam Hussein, for it is essential, for the French proposal to succeed that Saddam Hussein

recognize the need to comply with the United Nations resolutions.

[*English*]

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

It is the view of many Canadians today that the effectiveness of the United Nations is being undermined by some member states that have distorted the UN charter to justify force to end the gulf conflict at this time.

In order to keep collective security measures within the bounds of the UN charter, will Canada press for the reconvening of the Security Council immediately to review and report to the world on the effectiveness of the sanctions to date and, if necessary, to recommend any further UN actions?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member who follows these things closely will know that the Secretary-General came back and met with the Security Council yesterday. They are meeting again now. They are discussing actions that should be taken on what is the last day of the extraordinary pause for peace that was deliberately placed in the Security Council resolution as not only an opportunity, which it was, but a final opportunity, which it explicitly was, to Saddam Hussein to opt for peace rather than to force the world to war.

Apart from the new theology of her colleague from Winnipeg, there is no requirement for the United Nations to take another decision with respect to sanctions. The sanctions proposal is now in place and I should say that the Leader of the Opposition this morning announced that his policy is to wait. The reality is that one in the real world cannot wait forever. There come times when one has to take decisions based upon principle.

Our principle is that we want to support the United Nations and that element of the charter of the United Nations brought in by Mr. Pearson when he said: "There is authority to talk and, when talk won't work, there has to be the ability to enforce the words of the United Nations."

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.