

Government Orders

At that point it is not the United Nations that is taking the decision about what to do or when to do it. In this instance it is the Government of the United States which apparently is taking the decision that the situation requires military action. The United States, as a member state of the United Nations co-operating with the Government of Kuwait has decided that it is going to embark upon military action.

Because the United States government has apparently so decided, that is no reason why Canada, or Belgium, or Italy, or Argentina need make the same decision. We are sovereign, free to make our own decision how we want to contribute to the removal of Iraq from Kuwait. We can make our decisions about timing and about the method we wish to pursue in our own time and in our own way.

I would urge the government, as was so eloquently expressed by our leader today and indeed our critic for external affairs, to make that decision in terms of economic sanctions and not in terms of military action.

What will happen if we engage in military action in the next days or weeks in the Middle East? I defy anyone to foresee, where we come out of that in a month or two, or six. But I can tell you that if member states pursue economic sanctions vigorously and redouble our efforts to make them effective, the odds are much greater that an effective and satisfactory resolution of the dilemmas of the Middle East will be brought about. Sanctions offer far greater chances, than any military action is likely to result in.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech as well. I would like to ask him a question *vis-à-vis* sanctions.

We have heard reports for the last several days and weeks now about goods and products leaking into Iraq, especially through Iran. I would like to ask the member for Etobicoke North what his feelings are on that. How can we manage to avoid these leaks? We are looking at sanctions and how firm they could and should be, and we then hear reports about borders leaking and that Saddam Hussein is in fact getting many products into his country. I was wondering if the member could comment on that.

As well, could he comment on Resolution 662 by which the UN certainly asks for an early end to this conflict. Could he also comment on Resolution 674 where the UN Security Council is asking for the immediate withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.

I was wondering how long these sanctions would be going on. What would the hon. member see as a timeframe for sanctions?

Mr. MacLaren: Madam Speaker, I wish I had access to the information that would permit me to hazard an answer to the member's question, but of course I do not have such information even nor does anyone on this side of the House. It may be that the government's information is limited.

As I said earlier, with the possibilities which electronic surveillance at the one extreme and human surveillance in the more traditional sense at the other extreme offer, I cannot think that it is beyond the wit—I was going to say mankind—of people to devise methods in which the sanctions can be rendered much more effective than they are today. What is lacking is a real commitment to make sanctions work because of the tendency on the part of some nations to use military force, to see military force as the quicker, easier option. But it is an option fraught with danger, fraught with consequences that none of us can you foresee.

• (2310)

Madam Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member. The period for question and comments has now expired. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Portneuf.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Madam Speaker, it is not easy for me to rise tonight to give my opinion on a resolution fraught with dire consequences. Often Canadian men and women wonder what kind of person they have elected and they often have the impression their members of Parliament can take decisions because they are not directly involved. I tell them that matter affects me deeply. Very few people know what I am about to say. I have a son who has just turned 20, the only child who survived out of the six my wife and I had. Needless to say the mere fact of discussing a matter that risk getting our