

Government Orders

started. Quite naturally, Canadians remain unhappy with this war and outraged that this should happen. They want our government to make a clear statement that Canada simply does not accept that this war is either necessary or justified.

Canadians also have great admiration for the professionalism of our men and women who are there. All of the comments we have made are not intended in any way to detract from it or from our personal concern for their safety. We do not ask for a new role for our troops because we want to remove them from an area of danger. Canadians, throughout our history, have been prepared in appropriate cases to risk their lives for the values this country stands for. Ever since the end of the Second World War, under the flag of the United Nations, our troops have served in dangerous peacekeeping missions.

We do not ask for a redefinition of their role in order to protect them. Rather, we think that as representatives of this country, our forces have a better role to play than to be aiding in the bombing of Iraq and Kuwait. It is for this reason that we call on the House to urge and direct this government, even at this hour, to change from the course it has been set on, to listen to the Canadian people and to restore Canada's place as a peacekeeper in a world that so sorely needs it.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, let me begin by assuring the hon. member that there are many colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party, including myself, who for many years have monitored the situation in the Middle East. I personally have travelled to Iraq, I have spoken to Iraqi officials over the years, and I have visited the parliament. When I hear of bombings in Baghdad, it has real meaning to me. I know the situation there and I know the people there.

The member has said this action is neither necessary nor justified. I want to direct a few comments to this point because he has indicated the dire consequences of war. I hope he does not suggest for one minute that any member of this House of Commons is not aware of the dire consequences of bombing, death and destruction. He does all of us a disservice if he suggests for one minute that anybody in this House of Commons or anybody across this nation looks favourably upon that

kind of activity. Of course it is abhorrent to us all. The question is whether this action is justified.

I want to say this to the hon. member and to all members of the New Democratic Party: I have heard President Saddam Hussein characterized by Stephen Lewis, former Ambassador to the United Nations, as a psychotic person. I have heard him refer to Saddam Hussein time and time again as a madman. The leader of the New Democratic Party herself admitted that at some point in time force may be necessary.

I want to direct the hon. member's attention to this: His party and others argue that sanctions might work, that they should be given time to work, and that approaches should be made by other people, other places and other times in order to change the course of this action and in order to deny the need for any forceful action. One of his principal party supporters has described Saddam Hussein as a psychotic personality. His own party members have described him as a madman out of control. How does he expect to appeal to that kind of psyche? How does he expect to appeal to that kind of person to end hostilities and to listen to reason? How can you reason with a person whom you have characterized as being psychotic?

Does the hon. member not realize that the Speaker of the Parliament of Iraq has said that 18 million Iraqis are prepared to die in this cause because they are believers? How can he talk about peaceful initiatives? How can he talk about sensible presentation? Why will he not admit that this is a situation that cannot be coped with in those ways, get on to justifying what has to be done and back the United Nations actions?

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the interjection from the member because it does really get to the nub of the issue between our position and that of the government.

The real issue is how to deal with Saddam Hussein. The issue is not whether Saddam Hussein is a psychotic. We accept that definition. We accept that anyone who would use chemical warfare on his own people is psychotic. We agree that he has one of the worst Amnesty International records. The mere question perhaps implies that the member somehow is more fervent in his opposition to Saddam Hussein than we are. This simply is not the case.