

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That was one of several instances in which we have used that bilateral relation with the United States, a relation which some members in this House revile, but which is after all an opportunity for unprecedented influence upon a superpower. We have used that relation to encourage the United States to work with the world in trying to resolve this problem.

A second area in which we have been extremely active has been with respect to the United Nations. Again, let me speak of American attitudes. As the House will know, members here raised their concern to us about it. When this began there was a strong inclination on the part of the Americans to go it alone and not to operate under the aegis of the United Nations. Again, Canada said that was wrong and that if this is to be done effectively and with authority, it must be done under the umbrella of and with the authority of the United Nations.

I would not claim that it was simply because of our counsel, but Canadians need to know that this country has influence upon others, including our great friends, on critical questions. For a variety of reasons, the United States took the decision to operate within the United Nations' context and that is why this debate today is not about what one nation might do. This debate today is about whether this country will support the United Nations in what it has decided to do.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): We have also, of course, been extraordinarily active on the floor of the United Nations in the co-sponsorship of resolutions and, more importantly, in drafting those resolutions, in finding ways in which they can be acceptable and, indeed, in which other resolutions which were important to the progress on this issue could be made to be acceptable.

Because of our unusual situation as an industrial power with connection to the Third World, Canada undertook a series of initiatives based on the understanding that Saddam Hussein, if he would listen to anyone, may well be more prepared to listen to other Third World leaders than he would be to listen to the leaders of the developed world.

The Prime Minister met with Perez de Cuellar in New York when he was there to co-chair the Children's Summit. He made a proposal, based upon the reality that is clear to everyone interested in international development, that the principal victims of this invasion are not exclusively in Kuwait. They are also the poor of the Third World. They are the poor of Senegal, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and of other countries that, because their standard of living is so basic, depend more than we do upon secure and relatively cheap supplies of oil. Many of these people are Muslim. Many of these people are people whose cause should appeal directly to Saddam Hussein, but we understood that we could not make that case as compellingly ourselves as others could.

The Prime Minister was in touch with President Diouf of Senegal. He is not only the President of the Organization of African Unity, but also the incoming president of the Islamic Conference and the President of La Francophonie. President Diouf, at the behest of Canada and, frankly, with some help from Canada, convened meetings of other leaders of the Third World and a mission was ready to go. It was in Paris *en route* to Baghdad to try to make that kind of appeal when Saddam Hussein called and said he would prefer to have that mission deferred, delayed, until after the visit of Jim Baker, the visit that Saddam Hussein did not allow to happen.

• (1530)

We did not leave it there. President Traoré of Mali was the co-president with Canada of the Children's Summit and after conversations between the Prime Minister of Canada and President Traoré, his foreign minister went to Baghdad, tried to see if there could be movement, came back and reported to my colleague, the Associate Minister of National Defence, who was here over Christmas, and senior officials to see if there was some movement on that front.

Again we have been active through Commonwealth and francophone and other connections in the Third World because we recognize that we have to do everything possible to try to persuade Saddam Hussein to understand how serious this issue is and how serious the resolve of the world is.

In terms of peacekeeping it may be—it is part of the French plan; it was part of the proposal I submitted on the Prime Minister's behalf to the Secretary-General—that there will be a need for some peacekeeping presence if we are able to secure a withdrawal of Iraqi forces.