

I want to make clear that we do not support the actions of Saddam Hussein in his invasion of Kuwait. We voted for the first government resolution early in the fall which condemned that attack on Kuwait and asked the Iraqis to withdraw from Kuwait. We also supported the economic sanctions and the military backup of the economic sanctions. We still support those resolutions and we still condemn Saddam Hussein for his attack on Kuwait, but we do not believe that war is the answer at this time.

Again I get to the major issue which I thought was referred to in a very convincing way by the leader of this party this morning when he said that the resolution which should be before this House, if the government were really being honest with the Canadian people, should be a resolution which determines whether or not we should go to war with the United States against Iraq. That is the question that is to be decided. That is the question that was decided in the U.S. Congress. That is what was debated in the U.S. Congress. They made a decision, a very close split decision, in which both the House of Representatives and the Senate approved supporting the Government of the United States in taking military action against Iraq. That is not what we are debating in this House, but it is what we should be debating.

The resolution that the government put before this House that we support the United Nations, is a very general, vague sort of resolution. It does not say anything. It does not deal with the real issue. The amendment to the resolution that we have put to the House makes it very clear that while we condemn Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait and while we support the economic sanctions, we will not support an offensive war at this time against Iraq. It is too early and the economic sanctions have not been given enough time to take effect and diplomatic initiatives have not been given enough time to work.

One of the nations that supported resolution 678 at the Security Council was France. From my point of view President Mitterrand made very constructive proposals that might resolve this issue. They were rejected out of hand by the United States and Great Britain and it seems by Canada as well, because we have not heard from Canada on that particular point. But they certainly have not come to the defence of Mitterrand and the French proposals.

Government Orders

Again to refer to the charter of the United Nations wherein we are supposed to pursue all diplomatic and all non-military methods before we go to war, we should have given the French proposals at least a chance. The United States and Britain say that they cannot support the French proposals because they link the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Palestinian territories. I think that is unfortunate. I do not accept the point that Saddam Hussein invade Kuwait because he wanted to help the Palestinians. I do not accept that for a minute. The fact of the matter is that part of the difficulties in the Middle East is involved with the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories which have been occupied for a very long time, contrary to UN resolutions, without much being done. On the other side, most Arab states do not recognize Israel which is called for in UN resolutions as well. Wrong on both sides. That has been left outstanding for years and years. There have been no economic sanctions and there has been no suggestion of military action to resolve the situation.

While I do not like the fact that this is linked to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, I do believe that the reality of the situation suggests to me that if we want to solve this matter in a peaceful way we should at least pursue President Mitterrand's proposals. We should at least give serious attention to the French proposals. I am saddened by the fact that they were rejected so quickly by the Americans and by the British.

When I listened to the Prime Minister this morning, I thought for a moment I was listening to a new version of Dr. Strangelove. The Prime Minister in analysing the situation said: "Well, it is true that there will be risks if we go to war with the Americans and there will be casualties but, for the sake of principle, it is necessary perhaps that we accept these casualties." What principle, Madam Speaker? What is the principle that Canadians, Americans, and other young men from many countries will die for in this particular situation that could not be resolved by waiting out the sanctions?

If the Prime Minister was living in the 13th or 14th century and he decided to go to war with President Bush, both he and President Bush would have to get on their horses and lead the troops into battle like Henry V did in the Battle of Agincourt and so on.