

• (1730)

Iraq had a bumper wheat crop this year and it is generally supportive in fruit and vegetables. The evidence that I have is that its economy is being crippled. How long can it supply a favoured element of the society, which in this case is obviously the military and its forces, at the expense of others? I do not believe it can continue to have 97 per cent of its exports cut off. I believe Iraq has a single commodity export largely. Its oil is not getting out, and 95 per cent of its imports are cut off. How can anybody say that it will not have an effect? That is a contradiction of terms.

The point is that it is judgmental. We are now using an argument that for the reasons that economic sanctions will not work in the judgment of the government, it has agreed essentially that Canada should join those other countries that believe they should resort to force.

I am not against the use of force. I have been trained for a life time in the use of force. It has been kind of a corkscrew feeling, if you like, where you train yourself to be the best at doing something you hope you never have to do, and that is true. I mean that. I would suggest that for those who are trained in the use of force and who understand the use of force, the more you understand it, the less you are disposed to use it. We are looking at here the unleashing of forces that will cause the world never to be the same. There may be a time when we have to do it but it has to be the last resort. Is this the last resort? I do not believe it is.

If we have to make a choice, let us weigh the positives and the negatives of each course of action. That is the way I have approached this. What if we go to war? This is not meant as a shock tactic. We have heard about a number of things. We have heard of the missile inventory that the Iraqis have, that they will be able to attack Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where incidentally Canadian forces are stationed. Saddam Hussein has said that he will attack Israel, and Tel Aviv particularly. I do not have to call upon the imagination of the House to envisage what that will drum up.

It is well known that Hussein has in his inventory a frightful array of weapons, a lot of which have been used in previous wars. But it has been some time since the allied forces have witnessed the use of chemical weap-

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ons. It is my belief that chemical weapons more than likely will be used in this upcoming campaign.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, just on the chemical weapon side alone about the kind of thing that Iraq has and will use. It has mustard gas which causes burning eyes, blistering of skin, coughing, and bleeding of the nose. Death occurs within about one hour to 30 years, depending on the exposure. I am told by the medical people that death in one hour is preferable to a death in 30 years.

They have a blistering agent. The symptoms are very persistent, producing incapacitating blisters. This was developed from the mustard gas. Death occurs almost instantly if the vapours are inhaled.

Nerve gases produce these symptoms: malfunctioning of the nervous system, twitching, incapacitation. Death occurs rapidly, depending on the exposure. Nerve agents can be countered with antidotes and we have heard some discussion of some recent antidotes. This is one indication of what can happen once we make the decision to go for force.

The Prime Minister in his presentation said something that bothered me and perhaps subsequent speakers can speak to this. He raised the question of how time to allow the sanctions to work would have a cost. I agree with him. Nothing in this world is free. Every course of action we take will have a cost. They have to be measured. The alternative cost of war has to be measured against the cost of war.

The Prime Minister talked about the economic costs. He talked about other costs but the one cost that he talked about that concerned me was the cost of bringing Iraq closer to the possibility of having a nuclear device.

I am concerned about that. There is certainly evidence that Iraq has tried to convert the core of what it has now into an explosive device. In fact it purchased uranium from France in 1975. While it came up with some agreements, there is some question as to whether or not these agreements have been followed.

My best estimate from the judgment of those who know, and those whom I can contact is that at this point in time there is not an imminent threat from Iraq. Nor do they necessarily believe that it will happen in the immediate future. While they do not dismiss the wisdom of a continuing embargo, they do believe that whether or not it is in the timeframe is questionable.