

Government Orders

pride about who will be in tactical command of operations at any given stage or any given time.

It is clearly a coalition and a partnership of autonomous nations which have committed themselves to a common and united cause. In my view, it is the best ever manifestation of the ultimate vision of the United Nations which was founded so long ago, one which has been so badly frustrated and fragmented by cold war circumstances so as to have never been truly operable until now.

The involvement in which we find ourselves is absolutely consistent with our historic traditions and our world reputation.

• (1640)

In fact, the coalition against Saddam Hussein would be severely weakened with Canada's full participation, diplomatically, economically, and even militarily. That is among the strongest of reasons for my support of the resolution last November and for my continued support of Canada's position today.

So, Madam Speaker, with no sense of enthusiasm or light heart at all, but in fact with a great sense of discouragement and apprehension, I remain convinced that our complete commitment to the United Nations and our allies in it is the right course for Canada at this time in our history.

We are pursuing a course for world peace and for world order which is absolutely fundamental to the best interests of our own country and should be to all other nations. It is a mission that cannot be characterized as beyond our values or our vision because in the world we know today even the Middle East becomes a close neighbour. We cannot isolate ourselves from reality, nor can we retreat from responsibility.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague indicated that he was supportive of military action, and I think I am quoting him correctly, "under the mantle of the United Nations".

I am wondering if he, like myself, is supportive of the United Nations and so committed to it that he would be prepared to recommend to his government that this

multinational force be under the command and direction of the United Nations.

Mr. Bird: Madam Speaker, as I said in my remarks, I would not criticize or condemn the coalition in the manner in which it is campaigning for peace in the Middle East on the basis of petty reasons about who is in command of tactical operations.

I believe that this is a much more realistic approach to the operations than perhaps would have been possible or operable under the flag of the United Nations. I have heard words to the effect that the United Nations force was not so effective or well managed in the Korean War, for example.

What is unique here is that each nation has been able to retain its autonomy while collaborating within what we are told is a concept of national command and designated or delegated a technical operation.

I would think that this is a very reasonable and appropriate approach to the hostilities in the Middle East at this time.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, I would like to say that this motion reinforces the force mandate of the United Nations and sets another precedent for the use of force. Does the member believe that the United Nations should be strengthened with a new force mandate and new precedent of this nature?

If you go to history, China invaded Vietnam. Vietnam invaded Cambodia. The United States invaded Panama. Israel and Syria invaded Lebanon. The Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia and Poland. If today the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia or Poland, or China invaded Vietnam, would the United Nations then be justified in using force? Does the hon. member believe that the United Nations would go against China or the Soviet Union with a force mandate and a war to remove them from those countries? Is that where we are headed with world government?

Mr. Bird: Madam Speaker, I believe that the resolutions which were taken in advance of the actions in the Middle East by the United Nations did establish the mandate for force. It appears to me that the unprecedented alliance which has been created and the successful action which I contemplate—although with considerable apprehension as do all members from present operations—will establish for the first time