

Oral Questions

Can the minister tell us if Canada would support international action to maintain a sanctions program until this brutal terrorism against the Kurds comes to an end?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, not very long ago in this House, the hon. member and others were asking the government to take action to ensure that help could be extended to children and to others who were disadvantaged in Iraq.

Mr. Peterson: Don't be cheap.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Somehow the member for Willowdale regards that kind of action as cheap. I do not quite understand that kind of logic.

Mr. Simmons: You wouldn't.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): No, I do not understand that kind of logic.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What we are very much in support of is action that tries to help people in Iraq who are victims of that regime.

That is why this government took actions beginning in the summer that resulted in a withdrawal from Kuwait by Iraq and its aggressive action. That is why we are supporting the United Nations now. That is why we announced on Friday of last week an additional \$3.3 million Canadian to international humanitarian organizations to help the Kurds. That, as the member knows, is in addition to some \$77 million for humanitarian purposes that we made available in the summer and on which we had not only made promises, but actually delivered the help to the people who needed it.

• (1440)

That \$3.3 million will be expanded as the need increases. Our strong tendency is to continue to work through international organizations, whether Red Cross, Red Crescent or the organizations of the United Nations.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my memory recalls the amount of money we pledged to help the tragic suffering of the Kurds is about

the same amount the government spent on advertising the GST program. I do not think there is any comparison between the two.

If we are truly interested in stopping that suffering the minister knows is continuing, should it not be the responsibility of the international community to go beyond just condemnation and to take specific action?

Second, I want to ask the minister if we have made representations to our Turkish allies under NATO to make sure that Turkish refugees are given full asylum in that country and that we will promise and take leadership in ensuring that a major aid program is provided in order to give comfort and security to the Turkish government and the Iranian government, which must provide that refugee program.

Is this not, in scope, similar to what we faced in Indo-China back in the late 1970s and early 1980s? This is a tragic problem, and I would like to know seriously what you are doing about it.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I certainly would be interested in knowing what specifically the hon. member, I presume on behalf of his party, is suggesting is independent action that Canada should be taking with regard to that situation. I would be interested in the precedents that he would invoke and I would be interested in his view as to the implications that would have for the sovereignty of nations in which there is an uprising.

With regard to activities of the United Nations, I would remind the hon. member that he and his party, or at least many members of his party, were not prepared to support the United Nations at an earlier phase. They are certainly now prepared to support the United Nations very actively in all aspects of this matter.

Some hon. members: That is a lie.

With respect to Turkey, I had the opportunity yesterday morning, to speak—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: There are a lot of people who would like to know what the answer is with respect to Canadian policy. I would ask all hon. members to give the minister a chance to reply.