

Government Orders

Otherwise, force will have been authorized by the world community, and on behalf of the international institutions Canada has spent five decades to design and to defend.

To abandon those institutions now, to abandon the unanimity and the consensus that has been found in the United Nations now, would be to abandon all hope for the rule of law in world affairs. The world agrees with that. The question is: "Will Iraq agree with that?"

The resolution we will be voting on tomorrow in New York is the desirable option that I have sought and that many here have sought, the UN authority to use force if Iraq rejects the option of a peaceful withdrawal. The House will remember, and no one in our country should forget, that the use of force began on August 2 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. It is now up to Saddam Hussein to determine whether the international community will have to use the authority of the United Nations to achieve our collective goals through further force.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Liberals welcome this opportunity to discuss some of the historic issues touched on by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

This past August 2, the Iraqi army, acting on orders from President Saddam Hussein, invaded and occupied Kuwait, a sovereign member of the United Nations.

Since that date, we have witnessed dramatic and unprecedented events. Today there is fear that we are moving ever closer to war in the Persian Gulf with thousands of lives at risk, some of them Canadian lives.

Liberals are strongly supportive of the broad international consensus that has condemned the Iraqi aggression and which has called for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Let there be no mistake, Liberals strongly and unequivocally condemn the action Iraq has taken against Kuwait, and support calls for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from this sovereign nation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the United Nations, Iraq is expected to abide by the UN Charter. It is expected to abide by the established rules of international law.

However, it did not. We are convinced that all Canadians who are concerned about fairness and justice believe, as does the Liberal Party, that this flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law is intolerable and must cease.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, we believe that Saddam Hussein must understand that his aggression and expansionism do not and cannot pay dividends. As a member of the United Nations, and as a nation committed to peace, Canada must not let Iraq succeed in its unlawful occupation of Kuwait. The United Nations is of the same view.

As we know, on August 2, 1990, in an emergency session, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 660, condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and calling for its immediate withdrawal. On August 6, the council voted unanimously to impose sanctions amounting to an economic blockade of Iraq. On August 25, the council authorized military action to enforce these sanctions.

[*Translation*]

However, on August 10, two weeks before the United Nations gave its authorization for military action, the Prime Minister gave a press conference to announce he was deploying substantial numbers of Canadian troops in the Persian Gulf. Unlike his British, French and U.S. counterparts, however, our Prime Minister did not consult this Parliament to discuss the matter and reach a decision.

[*English*]

Instead, Canadians saw this government side-step immediate parliamentary debate on this matter by sneaking through a loophole in the National Defence Act.

The position of my party has been clear throughout this crisis. From the beginning we have insisted that the government should commit forces to the Persian Gulf only under the auspices of the United Nations, and only after consultation with Parliament including full parliamentary debate.

• (1610)

In September, the Liberals as a parliamentary party, strongly endorsed the actions taken to that date by the United Nations Security Council.