

*Government Orders*

either directly under the United Nations or perhaps through other agencies and other organizations.

It ought to be possible to bring in engineers to deal with the damage: rebuilding highways, bridges, damaged buildings, water systems, and sewer systems. It ought to be possible and we ought to be ready to move in quickly with medical supplies and services to deal with the injuries and disease that will occur in the region. Simple food, water, shelter and supplies will be necessary, and Canada should begin today to plan for that.

We had a briefing this morning from Department of National Defence officials who had to confess to us that this was not the major issue on their minds at this stage and that very few resources were being made available for this kind of planning. I say it is an important role for Canada, a far more important role than to be involved militarily in this serious, mistaken war. Canada should begin preparing along with other nations through the United Nations for the aftermath. Let us simply deal with the geopolitical damage that is being done, which is another reason I may add for our not being involved as active combatants.

Bombs from the United States of America, France, Britain and other countries are being dropped on the people of Iraq and the people of Kuwait. This will exacerbate the feelings of intense hostility that the people of that region already feel toward the western world. It will be essential, if we are going to repair the rift that this will cause between the Arab world and the rest of the world, particularly the western world, that countries like Canada be ready to move in quickly to demonstrate that countries from the west do not simply involve themselves in bombing the people of that region, but that countries of the western world are ready to help in a humanitarian way. We must be ready to plan that help. We must be ready to work with whoever are the survivors politically in beginning to rebuild the political structures of that region. We must be ready as well to work to achieve some of the long-range solutions to the problem.

There has been a lot of talk about an international peace conference and about linkage. That issue has now passed because of the beginning of hostilities, but the

problem remains and will have to be dealt with, with compassion and vision.

The fundamental hypocrisy of the western world through the United Nations, in moving so quickly on this issue when it has simply failed to deal with the just demands by the Palestinians in that region to deal with the resolutions of the United Nations calling on the state of Israel to act, cannot last past the end of this war. It will be essential that the world community begin quickly to deal with that. Canada must play a role.

Finally, let me say that we must look at a particular and a new role for our troops in the area. The motion that we put to the House yesterday asked for the House to approve the view that Canada must not be involved in the military action against Iraq and the Iraqi positions in Kuwait. This remains our position. It is therefore necessary in our view that our troops become disengaged from the role of combatant in the area.

• (1600)

The government is moving in exactly the opposite direction. It was made clear today by General de Chastellain, the Chief of Defence Staff, that our troops are in fact engaged even more actively than before in the assault on Iraq; that is to say, they have offensive roles in assisting the bombers going in, giving them escort and providing other support for the assault troops who are attacking the Iraqi positions.

Whatever one thinks of the involvement in the past in support of sanctions, it now becomes essential that Canadian military activity disengage itself from involvement in this war, which is itself arguably a breach of the charter of the United Nations. We must therefore redefine the role of our troops. I submit that in the agenda I have laid out on behalf of our party, there is ample role for the troops and for the forces we have in the area.

Instead of becoming involved in the war, they must begin to prepare to be involved in the peace. Instead of being involved in attack, they must be involved in humanity and must be ready to assist those who are the victims of war, rather than to create war itself. These are solemn obligations, and this is a difficult period for Canadians.

Canadians understand the terrible cost of this war. The overwhelming majority wanted our government to speak more clearly against the war. The war has now