

Government Orders

Therefore, as an extension, the Liberal policy is and always has been in keeping with opinions of organizations such as the United Nations Association in Canada.

The same concerns we express today on this floor were echoed in the statement issued by the president of the association at the start of the Gulf crisis. Geoffrey Grenville-Wood expresses his concern about the lack of public debate and discussion around the role Canada is playing in the crisis. He expressed concern about the recent actions of the Government of Canada as being seen as moving away from the traditional and broadly accepted tenet of Canadian foreign policy, that is working within the guidelines of the United Nations.

Mr. Grenville-Wood also puts forward several recommendations, the principles of which I would like to share with the House. First, that Canadian Forces—that is the ships and the CF-18s—be placed and remain solely under UN command, and that Canada stick by that commitment.

Second, that Canada support any resolution that may suggest UN military observers to the Iraq-Saudi and Iraq-Kuwait borders to monitor and report any violations of said borders.

Third, that in keeping with UN conventions, Canada provide leadership in ensuring that all foods and medicines are delivered to the peoples most in need, especially children—the same children to whom we held the candlelight vigilance.

Fourth, that Canada do its utmost to address the problem of the refugees from Kuwait, if necessary, accepting under special provision those who apply for immigration to Canada.

There are situations in which individuals, leaders on behalf of their countries, should stand up and be counted, as we heard from the Associate Minister of National Defence and as we heard from the Prime Minister on the floor of this House on September 24, when he said that the situation demanded a prompt decision to stand up and be counted.

However, one can just stand up or one can stand up with pride and be counted. Unfortunately, once again

our Prime Minister has made sure that Canada stood up only to be counted as part of the United States.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a good deal of interest to my friend's comments, some of which I could agree with. Certainly he is entitled to his point of view with regard to his criticism that Parliament ought to have been recalled. Prior to 1984, I sat on that side of the House for—I shudder to think of it—nine years. My friend sat over on this side for a number of those years, part of the government benches.

I cannot recall one day assigned to Parliament for foreign policy debate for all of those nine years except for one time, and I think my friend for Saint-Denis will agree with me on the facts of this. The hon. Don Jamieson—

Mr. Prud'homme: Maybe I could agree with you once.

Mr. Friesen: Okay. The hon. Don Jamieson, a fine gentleman from Newfoundland and a very honourable member of Parliament and Secretary of State for External Affairs assigned, I think, two or three days of debate on foreign policy in one sitting. It was a good debate. He did it under pressure from the opposition.

During those years we experienced the takeover in Ethiopia. We experienced the scene in Namibia where Canada was thoroughly involved with the Front Line states in trying to find a solution there. We experienced the Argentinian-British confrontation. We also had Canada involved in peacekeeping observer forces in Vietnam. All of those, to my recollection, were without parliamentary debate, unless it was an opposition day.

The Government of Canada of those days chose never, I underline never, to make ministerial statements in the House on foreign policy matters. It took a lot of foreign policy decisions, perhaps made outside the House, spoke at the United Nations, but not in the House of Commons.

Since 1984, we have repeatedly had the Secretary of State for External Affairs make foreign policy statements in the House prior to making them outside the House.