

had this tremendous confrontation on the European front that riveted the world. That confrontation was between the Soviet-based countries and the American-based alliance in Europe. We in this House all hope that we see the end of this conflict.

As the conflict is shifted from one difficult front, the European front, to the most volatile front of all, the Middle East, we see for the first time these two former enemies joining forces to attack publicly, and I do not mean in a military sense, Iraq. There is, in this short time frame, a new working alliance. We can only hope that it is the beginning of a new front that will expand, not only for war-based activities but will expand into humanitarian efforts, food efforts, foreign aid efforts and human rights efforts, into other fields in which we need to see more co-operation.

Right now, in people's pleasure in seeing this new marriage on the international front, they are willing to put aside some very basic questions. That is that people are motivated to work together out of a basic self-interest. It is in the self interest of the Soviet Union to have a stable front in that part of the world, and to have a stable oil supply in that area, just like it is for the western nations to have a more stable oil supply. While we have this in common, we cannot let it override the reality that we need to strengthen the United Nations.

We, on this side of the House, have been petitioning the government, working in committees and writing letters to the government to remind them not to let this organization become dominated by American interest and/or Soviet interest because it must be the interests of the United Nations that allows us to continue.

The United Nations is by no means a perfect organization. As pointed out before, the United Nations has turned its back on many very important regional conflicts. Whether one is talking about East Timor or other parts of the Middle East, the United Nations does not move with one voice. Nevertheless, it is functioning in a way that this new alliance gives it newly discovered credibility, and we want to make sure that that continues. Interests change. If you allow one party, particularly the American party, to gain ascendancy without question, then you set in motion problems down the line. For example, the American government right now has a changing domestic scene. The popularity of the president, according to *The New York Times* last weekend, is dropping dramatically, in part because of the recession

Government Orders

which is excellent news for the government in this country, but also dropping because people are unsure of what will happen in the gulf crisis.

• (1250)

There was some television coverage a couple of nights ago about the president speaking to university students who were shouting "no war for oil". If that begins to shift, what does that do to the American president? Does he become more anxious about solving the crisis? Does he become more aggressive in his foreign policy? Does he decide that the battle is no longer worth the principle, or the principle is no longer worth the battle, and therefore it leaves.

For all these reasons, as the American political scene changes, its interests change. You cannot be driven by those interests. You have to be driven by an international organization on top of those interests. You have to keep reminding the government that the reason we were to be there is to support the UN, not to support the United States, although the United States is our longest and dearest ally and one for whom we would show any support necessary to make sure that its interests are protected, but we wish to protect those interests through the United Nations.

The United States is heading into congressional elections and battle fronts become part of political battle fronts. You cannot have the changing interest of a congress facing an election in early November affect the way it approaches the Middle East. Again, we secure the different political fronts by securing the United Nations and the Security Council.

What we on this side of the House ask is that this government does not get ahead of itself. The original motion proposed by the government was a blank cheque. It wanted to say that it had to go in and give support and only give it under certain conditions. Conditions change and we want the government to come back to the House to discuss this with us regularly. I think that is a fair and reasonable position and one with which most Canadians would agree. I am sure Canadians in the gulf who are ready to fight for us would be very anxious to see the next steps discussed in the House of Commons and by committees.

As a result of the concerns raised in and outside the House, we think the government's position should change and be put on paper. It should place all possible actions in front of us and come back here to discuss them before going any further down the line. There is an expression that you can get too far ahead of yourself. I think the government, in asking for that blank cheque,