

S.O. 29

Mr. McDermid: What about the speech of the Hon. Member for Guelph (Mr. Winegard)? It was brilliant. Where were you?

Mr. Caccia: We will hear what comes next. I entered this debate with the intent to be concise since a great deal has been said on this issue which makes it difficult to be novel. However, there are a few things which, in my way of looking at parliamentary debate and politics, need to be said. I build my reasoning on this base; when a civilized nation decides to answer terrorism with an act of war, it seems to me that then it gives legitimacy to terrorism. It elevates terrorists to the level of those who attack them, or believe that they are attacking them, with sophisticated weapons. I do not think that I am alone in adopting this starting point in thought. I believe that tonight there are millions of Canadians and Americans who think that way. I believe they are asking themselves questions about what is happening to the reputation of that great nation in this world.

Acts of terrorism, as we all know and concur, are awful. This act of war, too, is awful. Last night on television we saw the destruction of homes and the killing and maiming of civilians. That is awful, too. Tonight, when the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) told us that in his view the United States had no alternative, I held my breath waiting for the evidence, since a statement like that requires some pretty heavy, and important, convincing evidence. When he finished his speech and sat down, and this is why I am surprised at the indifference of the Tory back-benchers, I asked myself: Does he really believe in what he said tonight and does this Government really believe in what it put forward?

If he condones the attack provided that Canadians are not hurt, as he put it to us implicitly in his speech, then let us suppose—and perish the thought—that Canadians were to get hurt. Would he still condone the attack? Would he still say that the United States had no alternative? Last night watching what happened we saw that the attack was not just on military bases. We saw that by condoning this act, or by accepting the inevitability of it, the Government of Canada took a big risk.

The question is also one that goes beyond our own individual interests as a nation concerned with 1,300 Canadians in Libya. We must also ask ourselves the question: Can terrorism be checked by moving a fleet near Libyan waters? What does this achieve? I really do not know. I do not think that it goes to the root of the question. Can Khadafy be isolated from the Arab world by an attack on him? I submit that if the attack which we have just witnessed succeeds in doing anything it is in consolidating Khadafy's status in the Arab world.

The next question is: Is the threat to Libya not a way of enhancing the shaky status of Khadafy in the Arab world? The most overriding and dominant question, in my mind at least, behind all this is: Does the Libya-U.S. confrontation in the Mediterranean not pose a threat to peace in the whole world? What does it do to East-West relations and, in particular, what does it do to the relations between the two superpowers? Does yesterday's U.S. attack represent a danger to Canadians who

are in Libya? If it does, as I believe it does, how can we be ambivalent to the U.S. attack on that country? There is a contradiction here. The Government of Canada has to protect the interest of Canadians in Libya, but at the same time it takes an ambivalent stand on the attack. Therefore, the inevitable conclusion in this debate, as it strikes me at this late hour, is in the form of a question which asks: What are the alternatives to gunboat diplomacy? Many other speakers tonight have put forward a number of interesting approaches.

● (2250)

Against the background of violence begetting violence and violence leading eventually to escalation, we must ask what we are doing in terms of economic sanctions. What are we doing by way of taking the appropriate actions at the United Nations? Could we pursue counter-terrorist activities by way of an international police force?

The basic and fundamental questions which have also been asked is, what is at the root of all this, and if there is a solution to the situation in the Middle East, would that not perhaps remove the necessity of becoming engaged in counter-terrorist activities? We must ask if the Government of Canada has pressed these alternatives and if so how and to what degree of success. Is the Canadian public not entitled to know that at this stage?

I also ask myself some other questions, and I will conclude with them. I ask myself if the so-called Progressive Conservative Government of Canada understands the potential danger of this attack for world stability. Does the Government not realize that with this attack, the United States may have moved the world one step closer to midnight, the hour of World War III? Does the Government of Canada not realize that if Spain, France, Italy and Greece are opposed to the attack on Libya, and these are countries across the street from Libya, so to speak, there must be reason for this that we, comfortably sheltered by distance and the Atlantic Ocean, must understand and take into account in the formulation of our own foreign policy? I also ask myself if the Government of Canada does not realize that this attack is more than just a matter between the United States and Libya. It is an issue that could escalate into a world-wide conflagration.

My conclusion would be this: these are dangerous times. In part they are dangerous because the West is bereft of constructive leadership and resourceful initiatives. Considering how our country contributed to peacekeeping and peacemaking in the fifties, the sixties, the seventies and the early eighties, the inevitable question, almost in the form of a cry, is: "Where are you, Canada?"

Mr. Tom Hockin (London West): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add some thoughts of my own to tonight's debate and I would like to say quite genuinely that I have learned from every speech made tonight. This particular tragedy that is being lived right before us is the kind of tragedy that encourages Members of