

that he would use that time to regroup and to mount an assault against allied troops. That we will not have.

But if there were a clear signal from him saying that finally, after all this time, he was going to respect the will of the United Nations, then Canada would immediately pursue the call that my colleague made to the Secretary-General of the United Nations earlier today, and energize plans that hopefully would arrest the growth of hostilities and bring them to an end.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask the Prime Minister or the secretary of state to qualify that even further.

The Prime Minister says that they are awaiting a signal from Saddam Hussein. In order to have a signal, one has to have an open line of communication. We are wondering if the members of the coalition, including our own country, have maintained diplomatic contact with the Iraqis in order to maintain that line of communication to determine if there is any willingness—

**Mr. Crosbie:** The CNN.

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** No, not the CNN. I am not sure that that is the appropriate means for these initiatives to take place.

The fact of the matter is: Are we maintaining those open lines of communication? Have we determined from our allies, particularly the United States which is leading this coalition, whether they are prepared to undertake diplomatic initiatives to secure the withdrawal, which is the stated end, without continuing the conflict and the military action so that we can have an end to this very severe and tragic loss of life?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I think it has been clear for some time that the purpose of the coalition has been to have Saddam Hussein respect the Security Council resolutions and get out of Kuwait.

I think the hon. member and the House would agree that, whatever our expertise, it would be very risky for Parliament to try to make, on the floor of the House of Commons, the kinds of military decisions that the hon. member is talking about.

### *Oral Questions*

He is, as I understand it, asking us whether we have suggested, now that a military operation has begun, that we should interpose a pause before there has been a response from Saddam Hussein. If he is not recommending that, I am relieved, because I think the House would understand that that would be a very counter productive policy in the circumstances.

He asks if lines are open. Yes, lines are open. The situation is, as it has been for some time, that the responsibility to respond rests now with Saddam Hussein. I think that the member would agree, and I think most Canadians would agree, that it would be unwise for the rest of the world to act on an assumption that Saddam Hussein would respond any particular way without having heard from him. He is the aggressor. He is the person who can end the aggression. After yesterday, he has extraordinary reason to end that aggression. We hope he will send that signal.

Lines are open both to Canada through the Holy See and to other members of the coalition. We hope he will avail himself of that opportunity. Then, as the Prime Minister has said, certainly Canada would be prepared to move very quickly.

As was clear in my conversations today with Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations is putting itself in a position to be able to respond very quickly.

The House would have wanted me to, as I did, ensure the Secretary-General that Canada would be prepared to co-operate in any way and as expeditiously as possible with further initiatives by the United Nations.

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, it has been announced that Canada will be one of a minority of countries among the multinational coalition to place its troops on active combat duty. My party opposed its action yesterday afternoon. We did so last night, and we continue to oppose this action today.

I would suggest to the Prime Minister that, rather than being a symbolic presence for war, why should Canada's role not be to be an effective force for peace?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** Would the Prime Minister not consider removing Canadian troops from combat duty in the gulf and re-deploying our forces to provide the military