

External Affairs—Middle East

The security council has been fully informed of the United States action, and the United States has made it plain that the troops will stay only until "the security council has itself taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security". The step which the United States has been obliged to take in Lebanon has been rendered necessary by the sudden and alarming developments that took place yesterday in Iraq. In the light of the implications for Lebanon of these developments, it was considered by the United States that the United Nations observation group was no longer adequate to meet the current menace to Lebanon's security and independence, though I might interpolate here that it was thought at the time of the visit of President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles last week that the observation group would in fact be sufficient for the task.

Discussions are now proceeding at the security council, and the Canadian representative has been instructed to support all constructive efforts within that body which will have the effect of achieving the objectives outlined by the United States government and minimizing the threat to the peace of the area arising out of current developments.

We have also been kept informed of developments in London leading to the statement by the foreign minister, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, in the House of Commons at Westminster this morning to the effect that the United Kingdom fully supports the action which the United States government has found it necessary to take but that United Kingdom forces, however, are not being used in the current operation in Lebanon.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I know the house will have heard with great interest the report of the Secretary of State for External Affairs on what he has quite rightly called the grave events in the Middle East. I know the house will not expect at this time any more in the way of detailed information from him and would not, I think, expect any comments from this side which could not be helpful, and which we would not wish to be harmful. One cannot but feel, however, great anxiety at these developments and at the necessity—and it was no doubt a necessity—which required the United States to land troops for the protection of its nationals in Lebanon due—one must assume, and the minister's remarks have confirmed that assumption—to the grave events in a neighbouring state.

The result of this, Mr. Speaker, is that we now have in Lebanon United States troops protecting their own nationals and we have

[Mr. Smith (Hastings-Frontenac).]

a United Nations observer corps with its functions to perform. In that corps there are Canadian members. We must all hope that there will be no contradiction between the functions of these two bodies, both of which are there for peaceful purposes. We must also hope that President Eisenhower's statement that the United States troops will be able to withdraw as soon as the United Nations forces could take over their function represents a hope that may be realized.

I am certainly not underestimating the gravity of the situation, but at this time I do not think any observations beyond those I have just made can be of help. However, I would like to ask the minister one question. Can he inform the house what steps have been taken to ensure the protection of Canadians in Lebanon and in Iraq?

Mr. Smith (Hastings-Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, as far as Lebanon is concerned, we have over several weeks been in close touch and planning with the United States embassy in Beirut, and the Americans have undertaken that they will look after—I informed the house about three weeks ago that there were about 125 Canadians there; it now appears that there are about 146—the interests of those Canadians as well as they would look after the interests of Americans.

With respect to Iraq, normally we would have depended on the United Kingdom embassy there. As the house knows, the building was blown up yesterday. There has been some suggestion that the ambassador of the United Kingdom may have been killed, but there is no confirmation of that report. Apart from that there has been no suggestion of any loss of life. We have not been able to ascertain what the condition actually is in Baghdad at the present moment. There are approximately 43 Canadians in Iraq, about 40 of whom are in Baghdad, and we are hoping for the best. That is the best answer I can give at the present time.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether our own embassy in Beirut is not being given some responsibility, particularly in connection with those Canadians, some 140 in number, who are located in that area?

Mr. Smith (Hastings-Frontenac): Oh, Mr. Speaker, I did not suggest that our diplomatic representative in Beirut was not in consultation. Yes, he is the one who is working closely with the United States embassy in Beirut.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, reports from the Middle East without a doubt are the cause of grave concern and apprehension on the part of members