

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is a continuing assessment of the effectiveness of sanctions. I think that question has to be answered in two ways. Are they effective in their breadth and in the degree of support by the outside world? Are they effective in changing behaviour in Iraq?

The answer to the first question, are they effective in their breadth and in the degree to which they are respected, is very much yes. That has to do in part with the existence of a very effective naval blockade in which Canada is playing, I may say, a commendable role. It also indicates the degree to which there is firm international support. We are monitoring that. We are the vice-chair of the Security Council subcommittee on sanctions.

As to the other question, the impact on Iraq itself, there is some impact. It is not an impact, I have to tell the House, that looks like it will change Iraqi behaviour in the short term. Nonetheless I agree with the hon. member in his observation that we want to continue to press on sanctions and other peaceful means to make Saddam Hussein understand that the world is resolute in requiring him to leave Kuwait.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

As has just been discussed, we hear increasing escalation of war rhetoric, indeed an increase in troops and tanks by the United States, the United States seeking Soviet support of a U.S. led attack, and many declarations by Margaret Thatcher from Britain and others talking about escalating war. I want to ask the minister whether he is talking at all about escalating peace.

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs send a strong common sense message to the whole world that he will not commit Canada to being involved in an offensive war, without the full approval of the United Nations and the full approval of this Parliament once it is assured that all peaceful attempts have been made to resolve this situation?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party is given to long prefaces which include lists of statements that are not always accurate. Consequently I

do not want to be seen as agreeing with any or all of the several statements in her preface.

The position of the government is very clear. We are working to ensure that there is a peaceful resolution. We are working to ensure that if force needs to be used it would be under the umbrella of the United Nations. We are working very hard to achieve that.

We certainly want Saddam Hussein to be in no doubt about the resolution of the rest of the world, including Canada, that if he does not respond to peaceful pressures force will be used.

The hon. member is suggesting that we should build in some delays that would allow, I think she said, the full satisfaction of Parliament as to an action that we might undertake. I presume that means the satisfaction of every member of this House of Commons. She knows that would mean that Canada could then be rendered in a position where we have offered to support international action but when the time comes to act we are unable, because of the delays of our parliamentary system, to support that effective international action. I think on consideration she would not want Canada to do that.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I and all Canadians would feel that in a democratic country a full and open debate on whether this country goes to war is not a delay but an essential part of what this country's foreign policy should be.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, many countries support the economic blockade of Iraq because they all want to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in the gulf. Today, when he appeared before the External Affairs Committee, Gwynne Dyer said we should give economic sanctions a chance to work.

My question for the minister is this: What kind of information has he received from the United States and the United Nations on the current effectiveness of the blockade? Is he prepared to give sanctions a chance to work?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I just answered an identical question by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.