

Oral Questions

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that the Secretary of State for External Affairs is quite prepared to make available to the House, or to the Standing Committee on External Affairs, the full information on how effective the sanctions policy appears to be.

With respect to the Gulf situation generally, the House knows that the government is giving its full support to the concept of collective security with respect to the events in the Gulf and the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. We intend to continue with that policy and to support those people who believe that together, collectively, we have to protect the security of all countries in the world, certainly countries that believe in the UN and support the United Nations system.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. There are reports today that the United States will seek a UN resolution setting a deadline for war and ask for the support of the United Nations for that deadline.

On October 26, the Secretary of State said that he would entertain a full debate in the House, if there was time, on the Gulf crisis should conditions change. They appear to be changing, at least at the urging of the United States. This weekend, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that, while he personally might have some disagreement with setting a deadline for war, Canada would probably support that proposition. Surely, if the minister responsible is to go against his conscience, it shows how much we need this kind of parliamentary debate.

Will the government support the New Democratic motion for an emergency debate on this situation?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the House has already debated a resolution in connection with the Gulf crisis. The policy of the government is a policy of supporting the nations of the world in the concept of collective security.

An hon. member: We are talking about war now, John.

Mr. Crosbie: As far as war is concerned, war was an act that was instituted by Iraq as a country when it invaded Kuwait some months ago.

The government is not planning any declaration of war, but it is planning full support to the United Nations and to our allies with respect to a responsible approach to this crisis. It is a crisis that threatens every country in the world which might have a powerful nation living next to it, a nation which in the future might covet its territory.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the government clearly has not been able to tell the House what period of time it supports to see whether economic sanctions will be affected. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has said that his government would support a resolution, even though he may be in disagreement that we should be specifying a time where offensive action would be taken. Surely, circumstances have changed. We have not debated this in the House of Commons. We have debated the economic sanctions.

Again, will the Acting Prime Minister commit his government today to debate the UN resolution that will be coming up later this week, before that resolution comes up and before the government commits Canada to an action that has not had full democratic parliamentary debate?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the offensive action that was taken was the offensive action of Iraq invading and taking possession of Kuwait, by force of arms, without any warning, and without any justification, several months ago. That is the offensive action.

The government is clearly against that and it is going to support the countries of the world who are united in their condemnation of those acts. We will support whatever action is necessary so that Kuwait can be restored to the *status quo ante*.

With respect to a request for a debate, that is a matter, as I have said, that I will pass on to the Secretary of State for External Affairs who is presently travelling in the area, doing his best to ensure a Canadian presence there and to support those countries that have been adversely