

Government Orders

the end of September was hardly the thing that deterred Saddam Hussein from continuing on to invade Saudi Arabia.

The ships went on, as you know, Mr. Speaker, to become part of the UN legitimized enforcement of sanctions, but that again was after the fact. The ships were on their way and the government was saved from the embarrassment of having to make that decision and having it stand as a decision taken outside the legitimacy of the UN by the fact that the resolution was passed after it had sent the ships.

All the way along, the Secretary of State of External Affairs and the Prime Minister who now come to us with very high flown rhetoric about the United Nations persisted in doing things before the UN had legitimized them and even indicated on occasion that they were willing to go all the way with Washington whether or not there was UN approval of any military action in Iraq to get Iraq out of Kuwait. It rings just a little hollow for the Secretary of State for External Affairs to get up and talk the way he has to us about his great respect for the United Nations.

On the question of sanctions, I was very distressed to hear the Secretary of State for External Affairs go on the way he did caricaturing the argument, the debate, which we are having in this House as an argument between those who simply want to talk and wait, and those on the government side who want to act. We maintain that sanctions are a form of action.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Blaikie: Sanctions permitted to work are indeed the kind of action that is required and not an easy action. There are many legitimate worries—I accept that—about whether or not the multinational sanction effort would hold together. There are legitimate worries, but a much tougher course of action and a lovely precedent that could have been set if we had worked together as a world to say: “We are not going to solve our problems by war, but by God, we are going to solve them through the determined application of economic sanctions until such time as every country in the world knows it cannot step out of line or it will meet this same kind of determined isolation.”

That is the precedent that we would have liked to see set in this new post-cold war order that everybody is talking about so much. Not a precedent that the first time a crisis arises that we say: “Well, we tried sanctions for a couple of months. It didn’t work. Let’s get down to the business of war.” It is caricaturing sanctions as talk, as waiting, as non-action.

It is a funny thing to hear from a minister of external affairs who has spent his entire career as the Secretary of State for External Affairs going around imploring people to bring about voluntary—not mandatory or comprehensive, but voluntary—sanctions against South Africa, and to give those sanctions time because they are working.

Indeed, the minister claims that they have worked and has said to the ANC and others: “No violence. Let sanctions work, and work and work.” Now, we cannot even wait three months or six months, whatever the case may be, in order to try to solve what is obviously a very difficult problem without bringing on the conflagration that may indeed be brought on in less than three hours from now.

It is very difficult indeed for us and, I think, for a great many other Canadians to listen to this debasement of the sanction alternative, something which the minister himself has been such a great fan of with respect to South Africa.

The Minister of Justice, with respect to other things that have been said by the government today, and the Prime Minister and others, liked to make much of the analogy with the 1930s. I do not accept that this is analogous to the 1930s. I think we are in a new situation and I want to say more about that in a little while.

But the one thing I would say to the Minister of Justice about the 1930s, the one thing that is similar, is that in the 1930s the western industrialized democratic world did not do anything to help democratic Spain when it was under attack by fascism. Instead, it made money off the war effort and finally had to deal with the monster that it had created through its inaction.

If the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of External Affairs were to get up and say that that is a parallel with the 1930s that they see in their own actions with respect to Iraq and the arms trade there and the way in which we have created these monsters in the Middle East through our own participation in the arms trade, then maybe they would have a little more credibility when they stand up and ask us to accept their arguments.