

*Government Orders*

know it will be very interesting. I would like to say to the hon. member—

**Mr. Prud'homme:** There is lots to be upset about.

**Mr. Assad:** Agreed. The hon. member is right to be upset. But he made an interesting point. One wonders about the reluctance of members of this House to talk about the Middle East in public. It seems to me that if we have the privilege of being elected and sitting in the House, we should feel no hesitation about saying what we want to say if we are deeply committed. If we don't speak out, people will not respect our opinions. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you understand that if you don't speak up for what you believe in, people won't respect you. I agree. The reason for this reluctance to talk about the Middle East is that they are afraid of a backlash. When we want to talk about the plight of the Palestinians, they are afraid of being accused of anti-semitism. My father was a Semite. Why should I be afraid to speak out when I saw his country being destroyed? This is the place to speak out. Everyone in this House should honestly say what they think about this issue, because if they don't, they don't deserve to be here.

To the hon. member I would like to say that when we stand here in the House, we have the right and the moral obligation to say what we truly think and to defend those who cannot defend themselves. That is what makes them reluctant because they are afraid of being accused of being one thing or another. They might as well go home and let people who do have the courage say what they think.

[*English*]

**Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to participate in what has been a debate that has not only taken place in this auspicious Chamber in the country of Canada, but right across the international community.

It is a debate that has been waged and it is a debate that continues. It is my belief that most Canadians, in my humble estimation, would react in favour with the general response from the international community in response to the blind and naked aggression of Saddam Hussein on behalf of Iraq.

I say that because I believe most people share the general tenor of what has crystalized, if you will, the United Nations on the one hand, a United Nations that is able to mobilize not only one or two or three major

countries or the two superpowers, but in fact a litany of proud sovereign nations which have rallied to that call. They have beckoned their men and women to try to stand up for what they believe is in the best interests of that great word we call democracy, which that has many definitions to many different people.

• (2000)

I believe also that in a certain sense many people would probably value the general actions embarked upon by President Bush. It is not often that many Canadians, indeed many parliamentarians and indeed this member of Parliament, would go out of their way to try to pay some degree of homage to international leadership by the United States of America. Usually it is on the receiving end. Usually the United States for one reason or another is always subject to criticism, perhaps because sometimes it is the biggest, it is the most powerful, it is the richest, and it is the most influential. Quite often it receives criticism, whether it is from this country or others, in terms of being the popular whipping boy for everyone's concerns.

I do not pretend to be a military expert, nor an expert on the Middle East. One of the most popular words in describing the affairs of the Middle East is the word complicated. It is in everyone's vocabulary. My colleague who just spoke before me eloquently, compassionately, and passionately referred to the word "complicated". I do not pretend to stand in this Chamber as an expert on that part of the world nor on military exercises. In terms of what I hear from my constituents and what I hear in terms of my discussions with Canadians and others, the situation is that if we have not acted—and when I say "we", I mean the international community—where would things be today? If no one would have stood up to Mr. Saddam Hussein, would he be comfortable now in perhaps also having invaded Saudi Arabia?

Would it in fact have destabilized more than it has already the coming together of an international resolve of enormous repercussions and of enormous consequences in the positive light of the speed with which the Soviet Union has had its own economic and political revolution and the speech with which we see the changes in eastern Europe?

If we had not stepped in as an international community, the question of what would have been can never be answered. The answer potentially in some people's minds is a very scary scenario. In general I think the actions of the international community meet with very