

*Government Orders*

I would like to suggest four broad options that should be pursued at this time. First, evidence suggests that sanctions are working. The continuing and tightening of economic sanctions—and there have been proposals in how those can even be further tightened—seems a very logical step at this point.

The furtherance of diplomatic efforts should be supported by the Canadian government. In fact, the Canadian government should be leading in these efforts.

Since 1983, the New Democratic Party has had as our policy that we must support international conferences on the situation in the Middle East. It is not a new idea that originates with Saddam Hussein, and let us stop pretending it is. Let us stop fighting over the words about linkage. Let us look at the reality because most of the Middle East believes that there are many outstanding issues beyond the actions of Saddam Hussein to be resolved. This party believes it and Canada should be supporting those initiatives.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** Finally, we must develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict resolution in the region which includes every alternative to war. Such a strategy could include the settlement of border disputes through United Nations mediation or the International Court of Justice, promotion of democratization throughout the region, the establishment of a mechanism to reduce the arms trade and to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, and the negotiation of non-aggression pacts between nations of the region that could be the framework for an over-all peace settlement.

The decision we are faced with today, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, may be the most difficult decision that we as politicians will ever have to make. People have spoken—and we listened to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition—with great certainty about their position. As the Prime Minister himself has pointed out, all political parties are not united on their position on this, in Canada, in Europe, and in the rest of the world. Therefore, it is not a partisan issue.

It is an issue of conscience and an issue of supporting the least destructive method to resolve conflicts. It is an issue of how we see our vision of the new world order. If Canada's vision of the new world order is simply to launch into a war without having assured every Canadian that every option by this government and by other governments has taken place, then we should all be very ashamed because we have offered nothing for the 21st century.

There are people of my party, social democrats, who have a different position than I. There are Conservatives, Liberals, and people of many other parties. In all honesty, I have to say that I cannot stand here and say with absolute certainty that my position that Canada should not participate in any offensive action cannot be challenged. I cannot say that I have all the wisdom. But, having looked at the history of the region and this issue, the events leading to January 15, and the consultations that I have had—with people in the U.S. and Europe, with my friends, colleagues and constituents, and with other Canadians,—one must take a stand and say that there is more to be done. We have not exhausted all of the options. War is not an option today on January 15, 1991.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. McLaughlin:** It is not a question of whether or not I stand with the government or our forces in the Gulf. Our forces are doing the job they were sent to do and doing it well. It is not whether or not Canada is a good ally or a good world citizen. We are. The issue is whether or not after we make the decision we are making today—the decision about whether Canada will support a declaration of war—we can live with ourselves and know we have made the right decision. Perhaps we will never know.

As I have said, I and my party believe that all options have not been exhausted and that we have to take every one. Until then, I and my party cannot and will not agree to a war.

This is a situation that none of us can see into the future or how we will be judged by history. We stand here today in many ways alone, before the people we represent and not just as political parties. For that reason, I would encourage the government and other parties to hold a free vote on this issue.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.