

• (1320)

I hope the United States has not determined that by a fast surgical strike it can somehow bring the Iraqis to their knees because I do not think historical fact is on their side, quite the opposite. We are not dealing with a Panama here. We are not dealing with a Granada. I suppose if you like war, that is the kind of war you like to fight, you go in in the morning and you are back home at night. Maybe that is a slight exaggeration, but nonetheless that is what happened more or less in those two American military operations.

We have to give sanctions a chance. That means a war of nerves. It means a tremendous financial cost to the United States. I think that its allies should be prepared to pay a much greater share of that cost as the period of sanctions and embargo continues to develop. It is very important.

If we precipitately decide that the time has come, that we cannot control the situation without going to war, and we strike and go to war, then we have defeated the United Nations, we have defeated the Security Council. We have said to the world that peacemaking and peacekeeping and pressures through the Security Council, through the United Nations do not work and therefore it is back to gunboat diplomacy, whether it is with CF-18s or with frigates. That is what is at stake here. We have to make it abundantly clear to all other would-be aggressors that the peaceful world, those who believe in the rule of law and peaceful evolution, are prepared to pay the cost of waiting out this long period of blockade.

We know that in the United States President Bush is under tremendous pressure to go in militarily and sort of clean the whole thing up. I understand that he was confronted by experts in the Pentagon, not long ago, who in response to a question by him informed him that in their best judgment direct military action would cost the United States a minimum of 20,000 lives, that is military personnel, with an upper figure as high as 35,000. When one considers that in all of the Vietnam war, horrible as that war was, I believe the Americans lost 54,000 dead, the United States at this point could lose between 20,000 and 35,000 of its young pilots, soldiers and sailors within a matter of weeks.

Let there be no mistake, aircraft are important, aircraft can do a lot of damage. The navy is there to maintain the blockade but when you go to war, Mr. Speaker, you go to war primarily with one component

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and that is a ground force. You have got to acquire and hold land. That is what war is about. It has never changed. In hundreds of years it has never changed. You have to put foot soldiers, tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery in place and you have to move them. Anybody who has been in that part of the world, and I was there a few years ago, has seen the terrain on which these soldiers would be asked to fight. It becomes a horrendous challenge, particularly if the troops are unfamiliar with the kind of ground warfare and topography in that part of the world, whether it be the in the heat of summer or the cold of winter.

Having heard those grim statistics, the question apparently was then asked, "What about non-military casualties?" The figure there goes to a quarter of a million within a few days. We are not talking about a Granada here, we are not talking about a Panama. We are talking about a full scale war. That is all the more reason I suggest this government has moved rather precipitately so far in dispatching the two frigates, the supply ship and now the 18 CF-18s to the Middle East before a UN command was put in place.

That is what we would like, that is what we are holding out for, and that is why we are not going to support the main motion. We do not want Canadian forces actively engaged in military operations unless the entire operation is under UN command. That is where it should be.

No one country and no one political problem within a country or set of political pressures should dominate the major decisions being made, or that will be made, in the gulf. That is why I said a moment ago that I would hope that we would hold back.

The blockade is in place and Saddam Hussein knows that he cannot make a move and go beyond where he is. Incidentally he is beginning to feel the effects of that blockade. Just this morning on the radio news it was announced that yesterday in Baghdad the government called upon not only the civilians but the military to get involved not in military activity this time but in crop production and crop harvesting.

It said that Saddam Hussein has called upon the people to put up with less, to get by with less during this period of sanctions and embargoes. The Iraqi people are beginning to feel the ill-effects not in their extremity, certainly not yet. That will take weeks and months, but we can see some light at the end of the tunnel.