

Government Orders

Some of the things he has said, I suppose, are not music to anyone's ears, when questioning some of the motives of some of the actions. It is at times even embarrassing to hear some of the statements with reference to hypocrisy, but I think most of us appreciate and understand that this is true.

My concern is that the darker side of the issue, if you will, is very seldom heard in this House. I am sure that most Canadians are totally unaware of this darker side of the issue. I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, this is a rhetorical question, but I would ask my colleague why is this aspect not brought out on a more regular basis in the House?

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie says is true, although I would think that there are actually quite a few Canadians who are aware of the dark side of foreign policy, if you like, that is to say that decisions are always made for a variety of reasons, but only some of the reasons ever get into the official press releases.

Many people who have been involved over the years in the Canadian Armed Forces would probably be one group of people who would know that better than most. The official story is always somewhat different than the reality. Certainly those of us in politics know that this also applies, unfortunately.

The dark side, of course, is the involvement of the West in creating a situation in which we are so vulnerable to threats to our oil supply, by deciding to have our way with the world. It is unfortunate that it has to be a Saddam Hussein who wakes us up to this dependence. Far better that we should have recognized ourselves this dependence and did something about it. Instead, we waited for people like Saddam Hussein to come along and wake us up to this reality. Unfortunately, part of the reason for that is due to American, British, and other European actions in that area in the past, anyone who wanted to suggest in a democratic way years ago that perhaps oil should be distributed in the world in a different way was not allowed to survive politically. The only people who are allowed to survive politically are either regimes which are friendly to the interests of the multinational corporations or people who are violent and, therefore, because of their own sinful ways, are not to be intimidated by the sins of others.

• (1240)

Of course, the other dark side is the way in which we arm these people. Then we get upset if they do not do what we tell them. It reminds me of the invasion of Panama by the United States. It had to get rid of this bad guy, Noriega, after spending years using him, arming him and funding him. Then, all of a sudden, one day he did not do what he was told and then he became a demon.

There are some similarities with the situation in Iraq. It is not identical, but there are some similarities, as with others ways in which we in the West have operated in other areas of the world, and failed to understand how these things come to be perceived by people in those areas of the world.

I, for one, do not pretend to be able to enter into the Arab mind in its perception of this particular crisis, but I certainly am not willing to uncritically assume that everything that we have done in that area over the years is right and that everything that others have done is wrong. That is to enter into a form of jingoistic politics which the NDP, to its credit, and many times to its political damage, has never been willing to be a part of. That is one of the important roles the NDP has played in Canadian politics over the years, to be that prophetic voice which does not point only to what others are doing wrong, but which also points to what we are doing wrong.

People do not like to listen to that sometimes. They think we are not being loyal or we are not being patriotic. Yet, in the final analysis it is the people who are willing to speak the truth, even when it is about their own country, about their own civilization, about their own neighbours, about their own friends, who are doing the greatest political service.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important debate to be engaged in and one at which the House has taken a considerable amount of time. I think it is because those on this side of the House, particularly in the Liberal Party, and also our colleagues in the NDP, appreciate just how delicate a matter it is to show support for an international effort and at the same time maintain our objective of creating peace throughout the world.

As often is the case, the big questions come in small steps. One is caught not knowing quite where to draw the line, when to say no, and when to jump on the band