

Government Orders

poor country? How much money will it take to rebuild the oilfields that will be destroyed within hours? How much will it take to repair the ecological damage that will be felt right around the world? When will the bills start being paid for that? How much are we prepared to pay and how much are we prepared to absorb in terms of trying to deal with a serious and sort of controllable problem of terrorism around the world?

How do we as a country, as part of a western community, say to the massive numbers of Arabs around the world that somehow this was an act of charity to go in and bomb the hell out of their countries? Are we prepared to suggest to them that somehow this war will be a solution to those problems? I would put this thesis on the floor of the House. Totally contrary to the arguments of the government that this is a way to defend the UN, I say this is a way that will bring down and erode the UN. How do you convince millions upon millions of people in the Third World that this is not simply another exercise of great power domination covered over and camouflaged to protect oil interests, to protect geopolitical interests, to protect national interests in the gulf?

The United Nations is not the private preserve of western countries. The United Nations belongs to every single group of people in the world and it must enjoy the respect of people in the south. No wonder the real dangers that we face in the years ahead is the growing division between north and south, the growing economic gap, the growing gap of poverty, and the growing gap of power. Do you think that by turning the United Nations over as a way of attacking on this issue, using force against people of this kind, that we will convince people of the southern part of the globe that we are sort of beknighted and benign? Of course not.

Let us take a clear look at the cost of war. Let us be honest and forthright and calculate what it means in human terms, in economic and ecological terms and basic political terms. I want to contrast that against the role of sanctions.

Mr. Speaker, I see that you are giving me notice of time. I think we were courteous enough to give the Secretary of State for External Affairs some extended time, so I presume I might ask for the same privilege of members opposite.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the House agree that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre shall continue?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy of hon. members of the House and we will reciprocate on any occasion possible.

I want to talk about sanctions for a moment because this is where the crux of the debate comes in. This is not a debate, a nuance that has been presented of those who want UN action against those who are prepared to be pacifists and sit on the sidelines.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, I thought in quite a malevolent way, started saying "hey, folks, this is a choice between action or talk." No, no, that is not the choice. The choice is between what kind of action? What are the most effective action? What is the most effective instruments we can produce? That is the real issue. That is what it is all about.

Then he goes on to say: "Show me". Well, I want to turn it around. It is clear to me that the onus of proof for those who want to undertake military action about whether or not sanctions are working belongs to them. They must prove that sanctions are not working in order to justify the use of force. They must demonstrate that it is not working.

When sanctions were introduced by the UN Security Council, a special committee was established of which Canada was a vice-chair. Its job was to monitor and assess the effectiveness of sanctions. That committee has yet to report. It has not given an assessment yet, and I must say for all I respect the Secretary of State for External Affairs in terms of his experience, if not his logic, I am not prepared to take his word for it.

I do not think that Canada should be going to war on the opinion of the Secretary of State about whether or not sanctions are working. I want to see a very clear-cut assessment made under the Charter, because the steps are all set out as to whether the sanctions are properly being applied, used and effective enough.