

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### IRAQ

#### INVASION OF KUWAIT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Clark (Yellowhead) (p. 13232); and on the amendment of Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) (p. 13240) and on the subamendment of Ms. McLaughlin (p. 13244).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** When the debate ended, there was 10 minutes left in questions and comments for the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

On questions and comments, the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception):** Mr. Speaker, a very short question to my colleague.

I appreciated the presentation he made and I certainly agreed with all his statements, particularly the part of the need for consultation.

Inherent in what the hon. member said was basically, when you have defence forces, you need a critical mass. There is a minimum level below which you cannot go for each country and for the free world as a whole. It is very difficult to describe what the free world is today, but it is very important to realize that there is a critical mass below which you should not and cannot go if you want to contribute to maintaining world order.

These forces up front are in the shop window. They are there. What do you have in reserve after you have deployed them? How much more have you in reserve? What militia forces do you have? How many spare parts do you have? This is a factor in looking at when the embargo will bite Hussein.

As we are involved in this critical point and time now, and I do not want to make a political issue of this, but I did notice and the hon. member did notice, that on the very day before we were talking about this in the House of Commons, there were indications from a speech made by the Minister of National Defence last Tuesday at a

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defence association network seminar led to speculation that Canadian forces may be cut tremendously. I do not know where the figures came from, but the article said 5,000 to 15,000 forces would be cut.

I would like the hon. member to comment on how those kinds of comments and speculation are going to help us buttress our position in the Middle East now and in the future with those kinds of activities.

• (1600)

**Mr. Hopkins:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it is a very crucial one.

I mentioned in my speech that right now we are in a position to do some very fine work in the Persian Gulf and that we can do it at the diplomatic table as well. I pointed out that we drifted into World War II because no nation was prepared to defend the free world, not even Britain. It almost collapsed at the start of the Second World War, and we know what happened throughout 1940 in Britain. That is just one example.

We have heard from government members over the years that we must have a strong Canadian military community in this country and we must have equipment and everything. They have gone through six years where they have done very little and now they are talking about reducing the forces.

Government members have been saying that Canada did not have enough forces to do the job, and yet we are still in the middle of being expected to keep the peace in various parts of the world. We are expected to be helpful to UN forces when boundaries must be respected, even to the point of military action through the UN auspices. Why are we cutting our forces at a time when they are admitting in their own words that we do not have enough armed forces to carry out the duties that we are faced with in the world and in the country?

Even this summer, the army was a better diplomatic agent in Canada in the Oka situation than the government or any of its officials could ever hope to be. When we talk about the military force, we are not talking about guns, rifles, tanks, and ships all the time. We are talking about the diplomatic efforts of our Canadian forces. They are professionals in that field too. We are talking about their military efforts when it comes to a situation