

Government Orders

may be. This is what we hope and this is what was originally intended to be the role of the United Nations.

In this post cold war era, we are at a very critical time in international relations. Will we finally seize and realize the original dream of the people who put together the United Nations and have the UN responsible for world peace and such actions as may have to be taken in the Gulf? Or, will we go from a situation in which we had two global policemen who cut up the pie to a situation in which we have one global policeman left, that is to say, the United States of America?

In this instance, the United States has been successful in working with the UN and having the UN approve many of its actions. To that extent, those of us who are UN supporters support the decisions taken by the United Nations. But it is incumbent on all of us to ask of every decision taken by the Canadian government, the American government, or any other government, does this decision contribute positively or negatively, first, to the maintenance of unanimity in the condemnation of what Saddam Hussein has done? Second, does it contribute positively or negatively to the strengthening of the United Nations?

It is in this sense that we feel any further action by the Canadian government in the Gulf ought to be only in the context of a UN resolution. If things were to proceed to a military confrontation in which Canada is involved without the sanction of the United Nations, and, in that sense, an entirely new context having developed for that military involvement, we would as a country be involved in an effort that would undermine seriously the possibilities for the UN finally to realize its role. We would be participating in an action that would establish, not the UN as the primary enforcer of peace in the world in this post cold war era, but rather the United States.

That is our concern. We hope the government will consider the amendment. We also hope it would be in this way that the House might come to agree on something. The government, in my judgment, has not done this as well as it could have done. There are ways in which we could have agreed. There are ways in which Parliament could have been involved. The government has chosen not to do that, and I very much regret that because I remember the former Minister of National

Defence, who is in the House today, made a point of coming to Parliament when he sent peacekeeping observers to Iran-Iraq. He very quickly made a statement in the House and provided an opportunity for the House to comment on that.

Mr. Beatty: Your party said I was wasting time when I did it.

Mr. Blaikie: No, I do not think that is the case at all. We did not think you were wasting time. In fact, on every occasion when ministers on the other side have chosen to make statements in the House, we always indicated that that was the procedure we were glad was being followed.

This is a procedure that could have been followed this time if Parliament had been called into session. Instead, the government chose not to do that, perhaps for other political reasons. Perhaps it did not want to face questioning in the House on Oka, or whatever the case may be, but I think we lost an opportunity which I genuinely believe was there to come together over this particular incident. Instead, it appears that the House will probably divide on this.

I think our people in the Gulf, and Canadians generally, should see this, not as a lack of resolve to do the right thing when it comes to Saddam Hussein and the situation in the Gulf, but as one of the continuing flaws in our political process, particularly in the way the government approaches these kinds of issues. It is not a lack of support in any way for the men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is not a lack of condemnation of Saddam Hussein and what he has done in and to Kuwait. It is not a lack of confidence in the UN. It is exactly the opposite. It is a wish that Canada would do everything in its power to see that the United Nations becomes the principal instrument by which these kinds of crises are solved in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie on a question or comment.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his usual grasp of a very complex topic. I also suggest that he has brought a slightly different tone and probably a different plane to the debate that I have followed for the past couple of days.