

Government Orders

are to date. Only if these measures fail do we consider military enforcement.

I have here a record of the sanctions and their descriptions. I see that on August 25 sanction 665 was invoked. It called upon maritime forces to use such measures as may be necessary. My understanding is, using the best information I can get, there seems to be general agreement. I have heard it mentioned a couple of times here in this House this afternoon that in order for the allies, or the United Nations if you like, to find out if the sanctions are biting they need from six to twelve months.

There is general agreement that sanctions can work because the economy of Iraq is semi-developed. It needs to import three-quarters of its food. Most on its manufactured goods and foreign currency depends of the export of oil, which it cannot do now. We are looking at February 15 as the minimum time that sanctions are likely to bite, or perhaps up to close to the end of 1991. I would like the minister to explain to this House why we seem to be taking this premature action to talk about all necessary means, which I believe certainly includes force. I equate all necessary means, the ultimate being force. Why are we entering into that debate at this particular point in time? Why not give embargoes a chance to work?

Mrs. Collins: Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague from Bonavista—Twillingate has had a long and honourable career with the Armed Forces. I know his sincere interest for the well-being of our men and women serving in the Persian Gulf and has much knowledge of their activities.

I agree with the member. This should not be a debate along partisan lines. It is something we are all concerned about. It is the future of peace and security in the world, and the role that our people will play there.

The hon. member has raised a very important question. The Secretary of State earlier today during Question Period tried to respond to the question about sanctions, are they working?

As I understand it, through the United Nations there is a committee which is asked to review the enforcement of the sanctions, particularly dealing with resolution 661, which was the overriding resolution involving sanctions.

Canada serves, I believe, as the vice-chair of that committee.

It is the assessment that the sanctions are not working effectively in the sense that while indeed the ordinary person in Iraq may suffer and there may indeed be shortages of various commodities, it is not affecting those who are empowered to make the decisions. As long as Saddam Hussein keeps his own agenda of maintaining his involvement with Kuwait ahead of the well-being of his own people, it is not really having the kind of impact that we would like it to have.

Among the international community there is a consensus that we have to keep the pressure on. As my hon. colleague knows, the resolution coming forward at the United Nations tomorrow provides this pause—this time of goodwill—in a sense saying: “Okay, we give you a chance to get out of Kuwait”.

As the Secretary of State for External Affairs said earlier, perhaps there is even some provision there for discussion on some of the grievances that have been involved through the United Nations. But there will come a time when through the international community, we will be prepared to say that other methods or other measures may be required. The resolution does not say they will be, but it does indicate that they may be. It creates a pressure to get this issue resolved because it is apparent that to date at least the resolutions of the UN do not seem to have had that bite and that kind of impact. There has to be that continuing pressure.

It is for that reason that certainly Canada, along with other countries on the Security Council, believes that it is important to provide for this further resolution; provide for that option. It does not necessarily say it will happen as I have indicated, and as I think the Secretary of State for External Affairs has indicated. It does not change Canada's role in and of itself because that would have to be a discussion and a debate at a further time. It does create a new sense of pressure which we hope will have an impact on Saddam Hussein and bring him to his senses to realize that he is not going to win. He cannot win in the long term. He might as well cut his losses, get out of Kuwait and have peace and stability restored to that part of the Middle East.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the minister. I listened with care to her assessment of the sanctions not having a bite against