

Government Orders

I believe that when this is over, a peace conference should be proposed and all participants should be willing to achieve a final resolution of this issue to ensure some kind of secure boundaries for the Palestinians as well as for the State of Israel. I think that is consistent with the UN resolution 242 and others. Ultimately, we have to achieve something like that before we will have lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I apologize to my colleague. I did not arrive until the last five minutes of his speech, but I know him to be a very sincere individual who has once again shown that to be true.

In these kinds of situations I usually turn to Tommy Douglas and see what he had to say about war, peace and a whole host of things. We are talking about American foreign policy here. Tommy Douglas said that the Americans have their hawks and doves and the Canadian politicians have their parrots.

Another indication is that this war is about oil. It is about power and it is about money. A wise journalist in the United States said that if Kuwait was full of coconut trees and date palms, the Americans and the other coalition of nations would never have invaded Kuwait.

The President of the United States has tried on many occasions, as has our Prime Minister, to explain the rationale for this war. He started out by saying: "We have some national American interests in Kuwait". That was not acceptable. He then said: "We are going to lose jobs". That was not acceptable. So he turned to the aggressor stance. "Let's get after Saddam Hussein".

Last night was a surgical manoeuvre. Tonight I think it is resulting in a malpractice suit. I would like the hon. member to comment on American policy and Canadian corroboration, co-operation or just the following of American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member again for his kind words and for his question. Canada and the United States are two very different countries and we can and should pursue our interests and our responsibilities on the world stage in very different ways.

For Canada to simply follow the United States, whether the United States may be pursuing its own interests or world interests, is invalid. I believe that Canada has a

role to play by being independent of the United States; by maintaining its margin of independence; by maintaining its freedom of action and by not marching locked step.

A precise example is that we are not opposing the United Nations or we are not against the United Nations because we do not do exactly what the United States does, but we actually could be supporting the cause of peace and the cause of world stability by acting independently and differently than the United States.

• (2050)

American foreign policy, because America is the giant that it is, pursues a whole range of different interests. I am not the one who would be the first to dump all over American foreign policy. Obviously, in Kuwait there are some strategic interests, not only to the Americans but to everybody else.

I do not see why Canada cannot pursue an independent role in the Middle East, particularly with this conflict, and be very constructive without having to embark on a war. Certainly, I do not believe that necessarily it is a wise course for the United States to have got into this war at this time. I think it is dangerously premature.

I think it is an error in judgment that the American government has made, quite frankly.

Mr. Shields: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, before the debate starts. I am wondering if it is possible and whether there is agreement in the House to allow our pages who are first year university students to leave tonight, and maybe just keep a skeleton staff to man the phones and let the rest go home.

They have studying to do, and we are keeping them very long hours.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his suggestion.

We will do some kind of negotiations behind the curtain, and I am sure that we will come to some kind of an agreement very soon.

Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver): Madam Speaker, I honestly wish I lived in the world that is envisioned by some of the members of the opposition.

I wish I lived in a world in which all things were negotiable, where all people were reasonable, where discussion could take place and solutions could be