

And then, Mr. Speaker, we were also anxious to do everything we could down there to prevent any formal condemnation of the United Kingdom and France as aggressors under the charter, any demand that sanctions be imposed against them, and also to do what we could to help repair the lines of communication and contact between Washington, London and Paris and restore some form of continuous friendly diplomatic consultation between the western allies on these matters after its breakdown last October.

It was certainly a matter of urgent and distressing importance, especially to a Canadian, and I expressed this also in public at the United Nations, that the United States should be on one side of this issue and the United Kingdom and France, our two mother countries, on the other. We were especially distressed at this because there were people down in New York, and they are still there, who are gleefully exploiting this division.

Having mentioned the breakdown of consultation, I think it would only be fair to add that this breakdown of consultation and agreement was not the fault exclusively of the United Kingdom and France over the preceding months. No other member, indeed no member of the western alliance, is free of some responsibilities and particularly the United States of America, which is the major and most powerful member of that group. Therefore we felt and we still feel that this is no time nor is this an occasion on which to adopt an attitude of superior virtue or smug complacency over the righteousness of our own position. We felt and we still feel that the thing to do is to get out of this crisis without a war and without violating the United Nations principles and charter, and then to draw the necessary conclusions from the crisis so that the western coalition will not collapse again in the days ahead when other problems will arise, as they are bound to do.

#### Strains on the Commonwealth

Then also, and this was a matter which was very much on our minds, we were anxious to do what we could to hold the Commonwealth together in this very severe test. It was badly and dangerously split. At one stage after the fighting on land began it was on the verge of dissolution, and that is not an exaggerated observation. The hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) is reported as having said on November 17 that Canadian leaders should bend their efforts toward restoring and preserving the moral and physical unity of the Commonwealth which, he went on to say, should have a common point of view on these matters. I could not agree with him more; but if we had followed at the United Nations the policy advocated by the official opposition we would have gone a long way not toward restoring and preserving the moral and physical unity of the Commonwealth but toward breaking it up. I am quite sure this is a purpose which no one in this house wishes to achieve.