

*Government Orders*

cols to deal with that in a civilized way. Yet, it is little wonder that the President of the United States ordered that invasion. He had read the polls and had been told that he had a sort of wimp image and that he had to get tough. He had to present himself to the public as a Rambo and that is why it was done. Within a day or two polls were taken and some 80 per cent of the American people backed him. And this government backed him. That is what I find despicable at this moment. Without any reservation the Government of Canada stated that it was regrettable but it supported the President of the United States and his invasion of Panama.

There are other places where we are not doing enough to bring into focus and observation assaults against democracy, liberty and human rights. I refer, of course, to East Timor. Despite the UN Charter's recognition of the right of a people to self-determination, the Canadian government refuses to recognize this right in practice when it comes to the case of East Timor.

East Timor is occupied by the Indonesian government following an invasion in the late 1970s. Canada has accepted the occupation and even engaged in efforts to have the issue removed from the UN human rights agenda. That is not acceptable. If we really believe in decency and humanity in international protocols, if we really believe that we have to treat people in a humane, decent and fair manner in time of war, civil insurrection and civil war, then we have to be consistent and support human rights and civil liberties throughout the world regardless of political ideology.

I can refer also to the situation in Romania as it existed before the violent overthrow of the Causcescu regime. We have been involved in that country for a number of years with respect to the construction of a Candu reactor. Surely, there must have been some Canadians attached to that project who were aware of the wretched, inhumane working conditions by which the Romanian people had to labour. It was nothing short of slave labour camps, working on starvation diets. Our hands are not clean. If we did not know, we should have known. When we found out, as I suspect we did months before, we should have cancelled the project at that moment and dismantled what we had done rather than adding more to that wretched inhumanity to the slave labour workers by continuing to construct the CANDU reactor.

• (1300)

There are many other examples of human rights being denied and Canada doing very little about it. I will refer finally, and there are many others, to the West Bank and Gaza—to the Middle East. As I have said on many occasions in this House the problems of the Middle East will not be addressed and peace will not come to that tortured part of the world until the Palestinian cause is addressed and settled. I do not care what has been argued and said in the past by members of all parties, the fundamental fact remains that the Palestinian people have been denied a homeland. They have been denied that homeland for over 40 years. It is their land, their buildings, their farms, their orange groves.

It is rather interesting that the State of Israel today can say, "The reunification of Germany is up to Germans. As long as they promise to be democratic, law-abiding it is not going to be a bad thing, it is not going to hurt us." I agree with that argument. But when it comes to re-establishing a homeland for the Palestinians, when it comes to Palestinian rights, human rights and liberties, somehow Israel cannot apply the same measure of honesty and decency. With wave after wave of Soviet Jews now emigrating from the Soviet Union, no doubt for many good reasons, and going to the Middle East, going to Israel, this powder keg is going to blow up. There is no other way of putting it.

Why is the Canadian government not taking a more active role? I know the Secretary of State for External Affairs has come out as a much stronger defender of the Palestinians and the Palestinian cause than any of his predecessors. I congratulate him for his courage. But I call upon this government, that if it really truly believes in the protocols that are going to be passed into statutory law later today through third reading vote that it also adopt the same humanitarian approach to all of these other examples where human rights are being violated, whether it is in El Salvador, Panama, East Timor or as they were in Romania and as they have been for 40 years in the West Bank and Gaza.

I want conclude by simply saying, yes, we will accept this third reading. We will support Bill C-25. But I hope that this government will expand its thinking and will expand its work in the field of human rights bringing a sense of humanity to international protocols and bringing justice to down-trodden people such as the Palestinians in their valiant struggle to establish and re-establish for themselves their homeland. So we in the New Democratic Party support Bill C-25 at third reading