

shipped out of the west coast ports. My question to my friend is how long, in his best judgment, does he think this embargo on food products will exist and does he agree with it?

Mr. Volpe: I thank my hon. colleague from Thunder Bay—Nipigon for his question. He raised an issue that has been debated among many of our colleagues and one that I raised in my presentation. That is the question of Canadian interests. The interests are twofold; those of principle that should be applied generally and should transcend borders and individual interests, and the other one of pure monetary interest. We take the second one.

Until recently, like most Canadians, I was not aware of the level of trade in agricultural products between our country and Iraq. It appears that Iraq is one of our biggest importers of grain. It is one of our biggest customers. In fact, I heard one member claim that it is our biggest consumer of agricultural goods. If that is the case, and I take into account the fact that the member was trying to make a point when he said it is the biggest, the fact of the matter is that the blockade is influencing our export of agricultural goods. It is influencing as well the level of involvement we have in transportation. It is going to have an impact on the people who are dependent on both for jobs and livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, I would never suggest for a moment that we should examine our principles on the basis of economic advantage to a region of Canada or to Canadians at large. So, I want to address the second question, of the principle that we have already put aside by being involved in this crisis. I do not think there is anyone here or in this country can give my hon. colleague a satisfactory response with respect to a termination date. One would hope that the solution is a peaceful and speedy so that we can recall our young men and women to serve Canadians in Canada, or to serve under the auspices of international bodies that makes decision before a super-power imposes it on them.

Secondly, we hope there is a peaceful solution so that we normalize relations not only with that country, but with others so that our economies can get back on the footing they were on a couple of months ago so that we can produce for others, and return to the normalization of prices in the energy area.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate. The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to be able to participate in this debate.

I would like to begin my remarks by saying that I, along with other members in this Chamber, condemn Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. In fact, not only Iraq, but its president should be condemned for many other actions it has taken in recent years. Saddam Hussein should not be the leader of that country. In fact, should be locked away.

I would like to pay tribute to the troops who are now in that area of the world, to the embassy staff in that region under a very difficult situation and also to the Canadian citizens in that region. Of course, my thoughts go out to those people and members of their families in Canada who are very concerned about their welfare, and particularly to one individual in the City of Moose Jaw, Paul Francoeur, a member of the armed forces presently in the Middle East. My best wishes and thoughts go out to him and his family.

I would like to take a slightly different approach than some members have been taking with respect to this debate and focus on a couple of areas; the role and purpose of the United Nations, and with respect to democracy here in this country.

The existence of the United Nations fundamentally, is to provide peace and harmony in this world. Since it was created at the end of World War II, it has suffered many setbacks and has struggled during its history. I believe that the recent actions and resolutions passed by the United Nations have had the most unified support that the UN has perhaps ever experienced.

One of the reasons for that support has been the turn-around by the Americans. These days the United States is praising the United Nations.

This has not always been the case. It was not very long ago that the United States was calling for the United Nations to leave New York. The United States still owes some \$750 million to the United Nations and, perhaps, should be considering paying its contribution.