

Government Orders

the UN involved with this war preparation task what are we going to do post-war? What are we going to do if we have a peaceful settlement? What are we going to do if we do not have a peaceful settlement?

Again the UN plays an important role because as we move into resolution of a conflict we have to be prepared for the other side. This particular resolution is just the beginning of a debate. I am interested to see what contributions the government continues to make and how it receives the amendments put forward by this party. Of course the hon. member's party has put forward some interesting amendments, and the total package represents a very interesting way of approaching this particular problem and shows consensus.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I think this is the first time I have spoken in the House—and I have been here for nearly 20 years—in which I see in front of me one other member. Anyway, because it is the lunch hour—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pappas): Order, please. There was agreement that other members would be out for lunch. I hope the hon. member would not bring attention to it.

Other members are either in the lobby or watching the member on television, so it is not a question of them not being here because of the lunch hour. The hon. member is a long-time member and knows that he should not reflect on who is here and who is not here.

• (1310)

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comment. It was not meant to be a criticism. It was more of a humorous remark, but I withdraw that statement. I know the quality in the audience is absolutely superb.

The issue under debate has been with us for only a couple of months, but in retrospect one has almost to state at the outset it was inevitable that a major military confrontation would erupt in the Middle East at some time, whether it was last summer, this fall or this winter, because there are so many serious problems that have gone unsolved in that part of the world for so long.

What we see in Iraq with Saddam Hussein is not the only issue in the Middle East. I want to refer to at least one other issue that has been crying out for a solution for a long time.

On August 2, certainly the world was shocked, angered and saddened at this very sudden military seizure by direct action and direct force of the independent state of Kuwait. All those—and certainly this House—who believe in and support democratic institutions and the peaceful evolution of our societies condemn this military move out of hand.

By way of introduction I cannot help but reflect on the bitter ironies that are so apparent in what is going on in the Middle East and in the gulf. Indeed reference has already been made to the seven or eight long years during which Iraq was engaged in a war with its neighbour Iran, yet during all those years and for years prior to that war virtually every permanent member of the Security Council lined up to sell weapons to both sides in that war: Iran and more particularly Iraq. Today we are reaping the whirlwind of that tragic misjudgement on the part of both the arms industries and the international community.

It is more than just mildly ironic that all of a sudden the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and the Soviet Union, to mention only a few, are wringing their hands and saying “good God, what has happened in the Middle East”, when for years and years they sold arms and highly sophisticated weaponry to the state of Iraq. They have built up Saddam Hussein's military to the point where he has become a threat, not only in the gulf but in the entire Middle East. That is just not good enough.

We also have a situation where all of a sudden we have discovered that the Security Council should take direct action because one state has been militarily seized by another. I agree with that action and those resolutions, but I would like to know why even to this day Canada and the United States, the United Kingdom, France and so on, have not come to the rescue of the Palestinians.

After all, the UN passed resolution 242 calling on the state of Israel as an occupying military force to withdraw from the west bank. At the time of the military takeover in 1967, at the end of that war, even with the UN resolution that was not one gun, not one tank, not one plane from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, or Canada. I did not hear any parliamentarians