

U.S. Invasion of Cambodia

would be the start of some kind of international discussion of the matter in the United Nations forum.

It may be possible that members of the United Nations could express their view on American policy. It may also be possible for members of the United Nations to influence the United States in its further pursuit of a disastrous and dangerous policy. Canada should try harder to get the Geneva conference back in order to seek a solution to the Southeast Asian problem. I do not deny that the minister is trying to do this. The present situation is so serious and dangerous that it is unforgivable for the government of Canada, or, indeed, the government of any other western country, to just sit and wait for developments to occur.

The situation is so serious and dangerous that the government of Canada must show a sense of urgency about the matter. The Canadian government must try every available avenue to try to get the various nations of the world together to seek a peaceful solution to the disastrous war in Southeast Asia. We must have the courage to speak out and, as I have said, continue the search without letup, indefatigably. Canada is in a good position to do these things precisely because of its special relationship with the United States.

Nothing less than the future peace of the world, and nothing less than the credibility of the democratic world to the rest of the world, is involved in this terrible action which the president of the United States announced last night. I urge the government to deal with the matter as seriously as the matter deserves.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one of the most difficult things to do today is to get a decent perspective on the situation that confronts us. War is not only hell, but it does more than any other human phenomenon to confuse the logical and rational sense of most of us. Emotional responses are, of course, to be expected. I do not like war. I do not happen to like violence in any of its forms. I believe that killing and torture are the antithesis of everything that we call civilized, but war or wars will not be solved by emotion.

Wars of national liberation, national pride or national survival will not be ended by emotional responses. I think it is the height of folly, perhaps one of the worst aspects of human pride, to allow ourselves to approach this problem either on the basis of our intense dislike for Communist states in all their

forms or on an emotional reaction that American involvement seems to stir up in some circles in that country.

Anti-Americanism simply will not do as the basis of Canadian reaction to the Cambodian crisis.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: In this instance, anti-Americanism is equivalent to total irresponsibility and abandonment of meaningful and useful Canadian initiatives. Personally, I have great sympathy for the terrible predicament of the American people in Southeast Asia. I believe the United States became involved in what it believed to be an honourable cause. I recognize that it is easy for us who are not involved to give advice. We are not involved in the agony. I assume that those in authority in the United States would love to be out of the whole thing if they could do so honourably.

We must also concern ourselves with the agony of the people who live in the area of conflict, Viet Nam, and now Cambodia. I approach this problem with deep feeling and with a considerable degree of humility. I indicated this morning that I believe the expansion of the present war is one of the worse possibilities we can imagine in terms of ending the unhappy conflict.

It may be that the generals and admirals who are reported to have counselled this move across the Cambodia border will prove to be right in military terms. It may be that the government of the United States will achieve its objectives in this way and bring a speedier end to the battle. However, I must confess my very grave doubts on that score in view of the history of this affair. United States generals and United States presidents have been wrong before in situations like this. I very much fear this is another example of the old saying that you can't be a little pregnant.

In all, the United States has been dragged deeper and deeper into this conflict, each time hoping that some measure would bring the terrible experience to an end. In giving the first indication of American involvement in Cambodia, the United States Assistant Secretary of Defence said that it was:

—a necessary and effective measure to save American and other free world lives and to strengthen the Vietnamization program.

We were all shocked by this development. As has already been indicated, in the United States there may be a considerable degree of