

Government Orders

But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.

I was in the American embassy in Kuwait during the late '60s. The instruction we had during this period was that we should express no opinion on this issue and that the issue is not associated with America. James Baker has directed our official spokesman to emphasize this instruction.

That was the signal that the Government of the United States of America was sending out one week before this invasion. The day before the invasion, the American administration said no to Congress in its request for economic sanctions against Iraq. We have to ask ourselves, what would this destructive war really be all about? It would not be to support the United Nations because there are alternatives to war. Rather, in a moment of candour, the President of the United States said this would be a war to preserve the American way of life, the consumption of oil. Well, we in the New Democratic Party believe that it would be profoundly wrong for Canada to participate in a war to support the American way of life and not to give sanctions time to work.

I want to point out as well that during the course of the debate in the American Congress, there was a very narrow mandate given, particularly in the Senate of the United States. A vote of 53 to 47, I believe. In this House I would argue that even if there is a vote to support Canada's involvement in military action, it is not good enough to send Canadian men and women into combat after a very narrow vote in a deeply divided House. To send men and women into combat in those circumstances was wrong in the United States and it would be wrong in Canada as well. It is particularly wrong and destructive when there is an alternative, particularly as my leader has pointed out.

I want to take this opportunity on behalf, not of just my colleagues in the House, but of all Canadians, to pay tribute to the role that the Leader of the New Democratic Party has played in attempting to find a peaceful solution to this conflict by going to Washington to meet with democratic leaders and in travelling across this land. I think all Canadians want to express their appreciation and respect for the leadership that she has shown in the search for peace.

I want to talk briefly about the alternatives that we have put forward and in particular that my leader has put

forward, and then to make a couple of other points. I know that my time is running out. I believe there is some understanding with respect to an extension of that time and I will try to be brief.

The leader of my party and all New Democrats in the caucus have put forward an important alternative to Canada's participation in war. That alternative involves the continued use and indeed the tightening of economic sanctions, sanctions which are already costing Saddam Hussein over \$2 billion a month. I say to anyone who suggests that somehow he is getting off scot-free, and that he is not paying a price, the price that is being paid by Iraq for its aggression, is devastating to the Iraqi economy. Let us continue that. Let us strengthen that.

• (1840)

But let us not plunge the region into a war which would see the entire world paying a devastating price. Let us have more diplomatic initiatives. The French initiative is a very important one. I received a note just a few minutes ago that tragically this initiative has now been withdrawn at the Security Council, that in fact the Iraqis have not responded positively to the initiative, and that the British initiative has subsequently been withdrawn as well.

Obviously, we are deeply disappointed in that. But surely that is not an argument for going to war. It is an argument for trying harder for peace.

My leader has pointed out the importance of an international conference on the Middle East. Some say: "Well, we cannot have linkage". If an international conference to deal with the tragic plight of the Palestinians, to deal with Lebanon and with other concerns, and to ensure that Israel respects resolutions 242 and 338 was right before August 2, as it was, surely to God it is right today as well. If that can help to resolve this conflict, we should be doing everything we can to promote and encourage that conference. Indeed, the United Nations itself has called for the conference to take place.

[*Translation*]

The United Nations said that at an appropriate time, after the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, there will be a conference on the Middle East. We support that.