

Government Orders

If we as Canadians say these things, we are betraying the efforts of Louis St. Laurent and Lester Pearson. These are men who had seen war. They were leaders and statesmen in times when 100,000 Canadians had died fighting wars which were undeterred and the origins of which lay in the unwillingness of the world to enforce the rules which all had claimed were universal.

We have to face realities about Canadian attitudes. Perhaps some Canadians are more comfortable with a United Nations that talks and not a United Nations that acts. Perhaps some see it as a place for soap boxes and for UNICEF boxes, and not as a place where the world comes together to take the hard decisions which peace requires.

I see some of, I think, my good friends in the New Democratic Party taking objection to that.

The reality is that the United Nations is a place where very hard decisions have to be taken. For years, it has not been possible to take those decisions.

We are now in a situation where we have acted consistently over time. We have set the stage. We are in a position where there is a need now to decide, and we cannot simply treat the United Nations as a talking shop because that was only half of what the Charter intended.

The United Nations was designed by Mr. Pearson and by others not just to talk, but also to act.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Langdon: Are sanctions not actions?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Someone just across the House called out that we should wait.

I understood the member for Essex—Windsor spoke about sanctions not working and I will come to that.

If the question is are sanctions working to deter the war machine, the answer is no.

I have asked the member to provide evidence he might have and he has not been forthcoming. There are some who say that we have not waited long enough, that perhaps the message has not got through.

Saddam Hussein has had 167 days to contemplate the consequences of his actions. Saddam Hussein knows what he is up against. There was a period when we wondered if that was the case. There can be no doubt about that now because his Foreign Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, made that abundantly clear in his remarks to the press after the meeting with Secretary Baker.

If we were to make January 15 a mobile date and extend it to February 15 this year or February 15 next year, by what form of logic could it be argued that Saddam Hussein would treat the resolve of the United Nations more seriously than he does now?

What about sanctions and giving them more time to work, which is the basic argument for delay as I understand it from the other side? That is an issue which, as the Prime Minister said, has been very seriously considered by the government. There is no doubt that if the international consensus held, the Iraqi economy might be seriously weakened if we waited six months or a year. If the international consensus held, it might in six months or a year, but that is not the end of the argument. There is no guarantee whatsoever that economic weakness would get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. There is every indication from the words and the deeds of Saddam Hussein that thousands of Iraqis, men, women, infants, and thousands of those Kuwaitis whom we seek to liberate would be made to starve before Saddam Hussein would allow his army to suffer.

That regime of terror is not like Canada. It is not a democracy like ours. It is not a place where one regularly reads the public opinion polls; those do not have much hold on Saddam Hussein. In that regime of terror we cannot rely on popular discontent to dissuade a dictator. And during a period of further delay, the plunder of Kuwait would continue, and we could find ourselves trying to free a society which has ceased to exist.

There is a notion sometimes—it was expressed in Question Period—that the choice is between a peaceful present, a peaceful *status quo* and a terrible war. That is a dangerous, misleading illusion. There is no peaceful *status quo*.

The gulf region today, the entire Middle East, is incendiary. It is a time bomb of conflict, extremism, and terror. The assassination in Tunis yesterday of Abu Iyad and Abu Alhol is an example, as was the terrible violence which occurred at the mosque in East Jerusalem in October, the bombings which led to the deaths of pilgrims at Mecca in 1987 and 1989, the riots which rocked Jordan in mid-1989, and the civil war in Lebanon. These, any of them, can become a fuse for frightening carnage and chaos. That tension is immeasurably more acute because of Iraq's aggression. As long as Iraq remains in Kuwait, the time bomb ticks and the world is playing Russian roulette with its own future.