

Special Debate

That will be achieved within a certain time frame, but beyond that, and this is why I support the amendment to the motion, where do we go from there? Do we get rid of all the arms? What about the refugees? What happens to them?

Are we going to develop a new society for Somalia? I do not want to cut into my colleague's time and so my final concern is that at a time when we are at the highest for peacekeeping, at the highest for risk taking operations in Canadian forces, the operations budget is being reduced: \$225 million this year, \$375 million next year and \$740 million the year after.

I would not want to think that defence policy was being made by the Minister of Finance. I hope that this operation will not be impeded in any way shape or form by the reduction in the operation of the national defence budget.

In closing, I once again, as I said at the opening, share the concern of those loved ones who are sending their husbands and wives, friends and sons and daughters on this operation, particularly at Christmas time. I can assure them that we will do all we can to ensure that they have the proper support and that the Canadian forces will, as usual, do this as a totally professional operation.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Somalia is very grim. The picture is very grim. This point has been made by other speakers and it does not need to be reinforced.

Let it only be said that according to reports coming from the International Committee of the Red Cross, Africa Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, the situation there is of such a nature that the world community must intervene and carry out humanitarian action.

The second point that must be made is that in supporting this initiative on the part of the Government of Canada, and as to the role that Canada should play in Somalia, something must be said about the fact that this is a new type of intervention. This is a major change in policy and therefore when this takes place, as it has been customary in Canadian politics and particularly in external affairs policies, the public should be consulted and involved.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs did not inform and did not consult Canadians. No debates took place before this decision was made. The issue is not a new one. It has been burning for a considerable length of time.

We have now crossed a threshold from peacekeeping to peacemaking. Having done so, we will be facing very soon questions as to what we do in the conflict in Bosnia or in Liberia or in Kurdistan, Haiti or in any other parts of the world. That question will have to be addressed by the present and subsequent governments of Canada.

The third point that needs to be made is there is a strange notion on the part of the government benches that this will be a brief intervention. Far from it. Peacekeeping has been engaging Canadian troops for sometimes 10, 20 years and even longer as the experience in Cyprus has shown, as the experience at the border between India and Nepal has shown. Certainly peacemaking can take up the same time, if not more time, than peacekeeping. Therefore we have to approach this new policy in a different manner than so far.

Fourth, the point has to be made concerning the budget. Are the funds available for a peacemaking action of this nature which may take much longer than anticipated? Only a few days ago the Minister of National Defence was expressing doubts as to whether he would have sufficient funds available to carry out a measure of this nature.

If the government cannot give assurance that there are enough funds, that the budget is not adequate, we are in serious trouble. The Secretary of State for External Affairs tonight did not touch on budgetary matters and did not give assurances, thus dispelling any sense of doubt on the ambiguity created a few days ago by the Minister of National Defence. The question of budget is very central and very important.

Finally, I would like to ensure that my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has time to make an intervention. Our thoughts also go to the Canadians of Somali origin in Montreal, Toronto and other centres who are very anxious to have family reunification brought about. They have gone through incredible hardships and sacrifices in the last year and even longer, sometimes two, three and four years.