

Government Orders

approximately \$120 million and where we have more than 2,000 peacekeepers but other missions around the world where we have additional Canadian peacekeepers.

I am of the opinion that we must review and redefine peacekeeping altogether before we agree to participate in future peacekeeping missions. This review of peacekeeping operations should take place at the international level within the context of the United Nations. Perhaps at the same time we could come up with some suggestions on how to make all UN operations more effective. However that is a debate that can be reserved for another day.

I submit that we should no longer risk the safety of Canadian troops. Nor should we continue to place a financial burden on Canadian taxpayers by footing what is amounting to be a rather expensive venture.

Members will by now know that this is not a decision I have reached lightly. I urge my colleagues to give this their utmost consideration so that we may find the best possible solution for Canadians first and foremost.

The Deputy Speaker: Particularly after a speech like that one members do not have to put questions to the member; they can just make comments during the remaining time.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member. I understand he is the first person born in Croatia to be a member of the Canadian Parliament. I sincerely congratulate him on that.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. de Jong: When we look at the history of the Croatian people I suspect we will find that the first ones were some of the earlier explorers of the St. Lawrence and other parts of this continent. The Croatian people have historically been known to be a great seafaring people. Descendants of the Croatian people can be found throughout the world. They have that in my common with my people from Holland. Holland was also a great seafaring nation and continues to be.

I am somewhat dismayed, however, at the suggestion and the conclusion of the hon. member. Understanding the frustrations that we all feel and that Canadians feel when we read about Canadian troops being mishandled and their lives being threatened while attempting to deliver humanitarian aid, the initial reaction is to get the heck out of there. We are trying to do good yet our lives are being threatened and we are being humiliated. In the end sober second thought has to decide what course we are going to take.

• (1710)

I hope before the government decides to act that it uses the intelligence network I am sure is operating in Bosnia—Herzegovina. As I understand it, it takes all the existing information and intelligence available to come to a basic conclusion or understanding.

If we remove Canadian troops and UN troops what will the results be? Will the result be a further and greater holocaust? What if our intelligence indicates that it will be? Even though that thin and inadequate UN line keeps some semblance of order and in its own way prevents a total holocaust from occurring, surely we have no other choice but to stay in there.

Can the hon. member tell us if he has any other information on which to base his opinion?

Mr. Peric: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows at the present time our role is not acceptable over there. It is a very weak role. Only under different conditions would I support UN troops in the former Yugoslavia. Otherwise I am in full support of pulling them out and bringing our Canadian soldiers back home.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words today on this very important and historic debate. I think we owe a great credit to our Prime Minister for showing leadership in reforming the House. Not only are we dealing with an historic tragedy in Europe. I think we are dealing with some history in this very Parliament. I appreciate the chance to participate in this new openness.

As I prepared for this brief intervention I attempted to boil down the situation as much as I could. I doubt that very many of us are experts in international affairs, but nonetheless we have a responsibility to our fellow citizens to make intelligent and well considered decisions.

It is a particular privilege for me to say a few words because the late Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson was the former member for Algoma. By the end of today all members will know that Mr. Pearson was instrumental in the very formation of peacekeeping missions by the UN. He won the Noble prize in 1957 for his leadership in the Suez Canal crisis. That kind of leadership exhibited by Canada and Mr. Pearson then requires that we show leadership at this time. Canada's stature in the world as a peacemaker goes unquestioned.

This crisis I believe provides us with an opportunity. The tragedy that is occurring in the former Yugoslavia can at the same time, like Suez, be an opportunity for us to find new solutions. We certainly do not want to see this kind of thing happening over and over around the world. We cannot co-ordinate conflict but we can certainly co-ordinate and plan our response to conflict.

The situation in the world is such that the nature of conflict is changing. Unfortunately we are seeing much more ethnic fight-