

*Oral Questions***ILIQUSIVUT****Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiag, Lib.):***[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]**[English]*

Mr. Speaker, today at 4 p.m. the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada will be holding a news conference on Parliament Hill to unveil Iliqusivut, the Inuit Spirit of the Arctic Pavilion which will be showcased at this year's Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.

For 18 days in August the Inuit will bring a piece of the Arctic to Toronto's CNE. The pavilion will feature Inuit businesses, artists and cultural performers. Visitors will be able to hear and see the famous Inuit throat singers and drum dancers, participate in traditional Inuit Arctic games, enjoy northern food of caribou and caribou, and purchase Inuit carvings, prints, jewellery and clothing.

I encourage all members of Parliament, their staff and all other Canadians to experience the Inuit way of life at the CNE this summer and, for a foretaste, to join us on the front lawn of Parliament Hill later this afternoon.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***BOSNIA**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Group of Seven summit opened this morning in Halifax, while 12 Canadian peacekeepers and observers are still being held hostage by the Serb forces. They are literally being used as a shield, as Bosnian government troops launch an offensive on the outskirts of Sarajevo to break the Serb siege of the Bosnian capital.

Could the Minister of National Defence tell us what specific steps have been taken to provide a safer environment for some 850 Canadian peacekeepers deployed in Visoko who are now caught between the two sides in a confrontation between Bosnian government troops and Serb troops north of Sarajevo?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. I can inform him that at the base in Visoko, because of the build-up of Muslim forces, certain precautions have been taken to be ready in the event of an attack. The situation is very disturbing but, so far, our troops are in good shape and not in any immediate danger.

As for the 11 members of the Canadian forces in Ilijas, this is a real problem because of the start of hostilities in this region. So far, they are in good shape and are not in danger.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during a previous question period, the Minister of National Defence said they were in a very delicate situation.

I wish the Minister of National Defence would explain what he meant by this very delicate situation and why these peacekeepers still have not been released? Could he be a little more specific?

*[English]*

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned that our people have not been released. Yesterday I called in the chargé d'affaires of the Yugoslavian government to lodge a formal protest with the authorities in Belgrade.

Although we appreciate very much the efforts of President Milosevic and the Yugoslavian government in Belgrade so far in getting the release of the hostages and working with the Bosnian Serbs, we have demanded they intercede immediately to release the 11 Canadians at Ilijas and Captain Rechner who is still in Pale, the Bosnian Serb headquarters.

There is no reason for these people to be detained other than the fact that perhaps these forces are being held as some kind of a shield to try to prevent the Bosnian Muslims who are amassing for an attack apparently to liberate Sarajevo from Serb control in the suburbs.

• (1420)

It is totally unacceptable to have United Nations personnel, especially Canadians, used as pawns in the middle of a conflict between those two parties.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister is now at the G-7 summit, together with some very important players in this unfortunate series of events, could the Minister of National Defence tell us whether today, the Prime Minister intended to make it clear to the G-7 heads of state that quick action is urgently needed to save our troops, to save Canadian soldiers who are now in the worst possible situation in that part of the world?

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure our Prime Minister intends to raise the matter in Halifax with his G-7 colleagues, because he knows perfectly well this is a bad situation and everyone wants to see the liberation of all hostages and prisoners.

*[English]*

I am sure the Prime Minister will be talking about this with his colleagues in Halifax. All members of the G-7 are as concerned as everyone about the deteriorating situation in the former Yugoslavia.