

Government Orders

they maintain our international responsibility and may complete their duties as assigned to them by the United Nations.

The United Nations is an organization which contributes greatly to the development of the global community. We must continue to be a full partner within the organization and continue to maintain a positive relationship with our international neighbours.

We must also continue to fulfil our leadership role in promoting the importance of the United Nations to the global community. We must encourage the United Nations to fulfil its responsibility to the international community and continue to promote peace and democracy while delivering aid to those in need.

We can be proud of our historic relationship with our United Nations partners. If we intend to maintain our leadership role with the United Nations we must continue to uphold our peacekeeping and humanitarian responsibilities. We cannot expect the United Nations to do its part unless we are prepared to do ours.

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you in your appointment to such a prestigious position. At your convenience would you please pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to his position.

It is a pleasure for me to speak to the debate on our participation in the Bosnia-Croatia situation and pay tribute to our fine soldiers who are serving in the UN and the role they play.

Since 1949 our Canadian soldiers have acquitted themselves well at each and every opportunity where they have been asked to serve their country through the United Nations. It is my pleasure to hear so many members speak so highly of the quality of the Canadian soldiers who serve with valour and honour.

Tonight we discuss and give legitimacy to our soldiers being in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the UN operations. Canadians did not have the opportunity to debate their soldiers being sent abroad potentially into harms way. For that I am pleased tonight to see that some legitimacy is now being given to them through the Government of Canada in this open debate.

Two or three things have been brought forward in the debate. Most Canadians have taken great pride vicariously in the activities of our UN operations since their inception. The Canadians have been received warmly and fairly because of their even-handed approach to their duties in the UN.

I have some concerns about Canadians serving in the UN and each operation and each after action report highlights the shortcomings of the United Nations.

• (2250)

The Security Council is quick to identify the need and requests volunteers. The operator is the Secretary-General for all operations of this type. When on UN operations or when decisions have to be made backtracking through the network to get to the Secretary-General is often necessary. It is often arduous and tedious to get a decision on what should take place, whether it is in the Golan Heights, the Sinai, in Katanga or whether it is now in Yugoslavia. We have seen two generals resign over the very same thing: the command and control of the operation.

I would like to take a moment this evening to recommend that our government look to this as a future opportunity for our defence forces, whether they are sailors, soldiers or airmen that they will know they are going in on an operation that has a task force established at UN headquarters to plan the operation and the logistics on a permanent basis. That type of planning would put our soldiers at risk but would ensure that there is a chain of command, a logistic channel and that it is in place before the operation takes place. The present system of an ad hoc chain of command and logistic organization is not good enough.

We have heard time and time again in the debate today whether we should be involved in the UN operations. We can participate fairly if the United Nations at the insistence of Canada establishes a permanent planning or task force headquarters as part of the Secretary-General's office.

Presently we have Major General Maurice Baril as an advisor. That is certainly not enough liaison. Other countries have advisors. However, if we are going to be there, there must be a method of setting up standard operating procedures, methods of logistic support and command and control. I think our soldiers would feel much more comfortable. Canadians would feel much more comfortable that we were sending our troops into an organization that is established to handle them in an operational theatre and could give direct and quick response to a situation in that theatre.

We know the UN lacks the human and technical resources at the moment. I hope our government will see fit in its future planning to recommend the establishment of such a task force and an operational headquarters to oversee such tasks as we have undertaken in Bosnia, certainly the humanitarian effort and the peacekeeping operation in Croatia.

This task force would have a permanent operational staff to establish some form of standing operational procedures, both in the area of communications and operating techniques or tactics.