

Special Debate

I am most impressed, and it was referred to I believe in a speech earlier today, with the proposal from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Agenda for Peace which he proposed to the United Nations earlier this year. Before I talk about that specifically, I want to say that the Secretary-General himself is to be given a very large amount of credit to the degree to which we have already been able to move. It is very little and it is very late, but the Secretary-General from his own personal knowledge of Somalia has risked his own stature of leadership to ensure that the Security Council and the United Nations itself would act in this instance.

In that context he has produced I think what may be one of the most important documents to come before the United Nations since its inception. It is an attempt to break out of a narrow definition of peacekeeping to a much larger definition of peace building, beginning with a whole process much in advance of when conflict finally erupts through what he refers to as preventive diplomacy and then in some cases preventive deployment. I suppose that is what we are into at this point. Then it is the actual business of peacemaking which again is part, I think at least, of this present initiative and then peacekeeping which is a traditional definition and a traditional activity that we have heavily engaged in as a country and, finally, building peace.

I am not going to elaborate on all this but I certainly would invite all members to look closely at the leadership that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has provided on these matters because they are quite crucial.

Just two or three weeks ago, along with several other colleagues from this House, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the member for Waterloo and I took part in a two-day meeting at the United Nations in which we looked at this document, particularly in the context of present day Somalia. It was a conference of parliamentarians organized by parliamentarians for global action which attempted to say: "Are there not ways in which we can somehow act more proactively, more constructively and more long term for peace building?"

I do not think the issue here, even at the moment with the extent of hardship and suffering, is simply or finally a matter of making sure enough relief food and relief supplies gets delivered from ports and gets transported to each and every Somali village. It is a question of

whether at the end of the day we can ensure that there is a different situation in Somalia so that this situation does not repeat itself again next year or the year after or five years from now. That is very different, if I may say so with respect to the member from Winnipeg, from the amendment he has proposed this evening.

• (2030)

This evening we are dealing in a sense with sending a very large fire brigade to put out the fire. Just like very large conflagrations this is a very dangerous enterprise. No one should be sanguine about the extent to which we are going to risk human lives, along with other aspects of our activity in this situation.

I regard this as a high point in the initiatives of the United Nations and the Security Council in effecting this international effort to try to establish some corridors of peace for humanitarian relief and assistance. In that sense this is an important motion which I hope will be supported by all sides of the House.

I hope we will continue to have not just debates in this Chamber or questions in this House but much more discussion in the committees of the House and in areas where we can do a lot of detailed and important work toward assisting and working with the people of Somalia and their neighbours to establish a just and lasting peace.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal Party support this resolution to send Canadian troops to Somalia as part of a United Nations sanctioned multinational force to maintain the security of humanitarian relief in that country.

When the hon. member for Rosedale who just spoke opened his remarks he questioned the Liberal Party's position that this matter should first have been announced in the House of Commons and first approved in the House of Commons. That is our position. We say that wherever possible these kinds of operations should be first brought to the House of Commons and approved here.

We say that because this particular type of initiative is of significant difference from the ordinary peacekeeping operations. In this case the use of force is authorized not only by the peacemaking force but obviously can be used against the peacekeeping force by the warlords in Somalia. Therefore Canadian lives are at risk. We believe that if we are going to send Canadian troops abroad where their lives are at risk there should be a broad consensus