

Oral Questions

contribution to the campaign for Somalia, were really used for their intended purpose?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague's question.

The CBC program last night made very serious allegations against Care Canada, but I should like to say at the beginning that those are allegations and not facts. We have to make sure that we make that distinction.

CIDA carries on a regular program of auditing of all agencies that it has contracts with and which it funds. It has done that with Care Canada and has found that all the funds provided to Care Canada in whatever program were used properly as indicated through contracts.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, regarding the federal government's financial commitments to Care Canada, does the Deputy Prime Minister intend to suspend all federal grants to this agency until the announced investigation gets to the bottom of the troubling allegations against Care Canada?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CIDA currently has ongoing contracts with Care. As I said before, we have no reason according to our audits to say that it is using its funds in any but the best way.

On the other hand, we have very serious concerns about the allegations that have been made. CIDA is immediately starting its own investigation of the agency as an institution. That will include a review of the allegations that have been made.

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BOSNIA

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that Canadian peacekeepers were not in the former Yugoslavia to make war with anybody. Unfortunately that view is not shared by the Bosnian Serbs.

They have declared the 320 UN hostages, including 55 Canadians, to be prisoners of war. They have declared that all agreements with the United Nations are null and void.

• (1425)

In response, NATO is calling on the UN to beef up its mandate and the contact group is asking for the power to aggressively attack the warring factions. The UN is at the brink of a protracted war with the Bosnian Serbs.

Will the government today formally acknowledge that the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia is over and that our soldiers are now being asked to play an aggressive peacemaking role in that region?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a question of semantics. Peacekeeping in the traditional sense has rarely been followed in both Croatia and Bosnia. It was not followed in Somalia. These are not traditional peacekeeping situations, but we all refer to them in the generic sense as peacekeeping because that terminology developed by former Prime Minister Pearson is an accepted role for the international forces.

The Government of Canada does not accept the notion that the mandate of the United Nations in Bosnia is invalid. We feel it can still work and we feel it can work with a modification of the mandate in a number of areas. I outlined them in a speech the other night and the leader of the Reform Party heard them.

We feel that the United Nations, the world community, has so much at stake that we should do all possible to ensure that a reformulated, redirected mandate can be discharged.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are not arguing about semantics but about the substance of the situation.

The major NATO allies are deploying reinforcements in the Balkans. The secretary-general of the United Nations is proposing to change the mandate and UN soldiers are being asked to play a more aggressive role in that part of the country.

Our peacekeepers have become peace enforcers, a role which goes against the original mandate and for which they are not properly equipped.

Given that our role is changing, no matter what words the minister wishes to use to describe it, and that the lives of Canadian soldiers are being placed at greater risk, will the government now demand a place for Canada in the UN decision making contact group?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the contact group is not a UN sponsored organization. It is a group of nations largely European—it includes Russia and the United States—that have come together and have tried to effect a solution. We have made our position clear that we would have preferred to have been part of that group.

As I said the other night, we have to look forward and not look back. As a result of some of the comments that have been made by our Prime Minister with respect to the specific issue, it has been agreed over the last number of months to expand the consultative process among troop contributors, of which Canada is a significant player. That will mean we will have even more