

for a special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights on Rwanda, and we were the first to offer funding for the dispatch of human rights observers. As the crisis worsened, Canada took a lead in supporting UN efforts, and provided a major contribution to UNAMIR [United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda] in support of Maj.-Gen. Roméo Dallaire. The Canadian effort to reinforce UNAMIR enabled this force to save thousands of lives, including that of the current prime minister. We were also among the first to lend tangible support to the second element of our strategy, namely, encouraging refugees to return to Rwanda. We sent a 200-person medical unit to Rwanda, and were the first to send experts' to see what could be done to restore the infrastructure of the country, its water supply, electricity and telephone services.

The crisis in Rwanda is ultimately a political crisis. It is clear that any final agreement must have the support of all parties. In the meantime, Canada's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping effort in Rwanda will help stabilize the situation and prepare the ground for a peaceful settlement.

The Canadian Armed Forces may eventually be deployed in as many as 10 ongoing UN operations. But even with this type of global involvement, Canada will also have the flexibility to respond rapidly in the event of humanitarian tragedies elsewhere, or in the event that the conclusion of peace treaties results in a need for future monitoring activities.

In the months and years ahead, in working with the United Nations and other international organizations, Canada must retain our position of leadership on this issue. We must also retain the capabilities which will allow us to act quickly and effectively when duty calls. I believe that we can continue in this proud Canadian tradition if we exercise judgment about missions and roles. In so doing, we can strengthen the United Nations system, and help make it the foundation of international order which we will require well into the next century.

I look forward hearing the views of the House on these important issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.