

right for Canadian troops to protect their own lives in a hostile environment.

It is time to reform and strengthen the mandate of the United Nations and to reform the rules of engagement for our Canadian peacekeepers.

The third option is that our future posture must be one of selective commitment rather than blanket support for United Nations operations. Canada has spent \$490 million and sacrificed eight lives in this mission to date. While many countries have talked peace, few have actually stepped forward with real commitment. How much more must Canada be asked to do, and to what end?

NATO talks and talks of air strikes, yet when the forces on the ground perceive the hour to be drawing near, it is our soldiers who are attacked. The time has come to bring our soldiers home.

In Croatia our troops are merely a political trip-wire with no real ability to effect events on the ground, or even adequately defend themselves. It is wrong to deploy Canadian soldiers in a zone where they are at such unquestionable risk while possessing so little control.

In Bosnia there is truly no peace to keep and Canada should not base its military engagements simply on moral grounds, but on real interests. Canadians are engaged in a sporadic and often dangerous humanitarian relief operation. Beyond this there is no clear mandate or time frame for their operations.

• (1845)

The position our Canadian government will take on this very important issue will undoubtedly have profound implications for the shape of Canada's armed forces, for the practice of future peacekeeping, and for the evolution of the United Nations and its future mandate.

It is my position that Canada should withdraw all its military forces from both Croatia and Bosnia. I am asking that our Canadian military be withdrawn.

Bring our soldiers home. Make way for the families living in the former Yugoslavia to come to Canada to seek refuge and to live in the land of peace and freedom that we all enjoy.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I am by no means an expert on international military operations or international air strikes. I listened closely to the last four or five members speak and I noted that some of them claim different origins. I also listened carefully to the statement by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway who went to Bosnia to meet with those on the front line. I know that many members such as the hon. member for Central Nova can trace their roots to this part of the world.

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Judging from what the last four or five speakers have said, I do believe that in this part of the world, the potential for global conflict genuinely exists. The current situation is explosive. And I believe that Canadian troops stationed in Bosnia are preventing the conflict from escalating further.

I also believe that, regardless of the situation described to us today, the murders or other atrocities, the world is poised to become a global village. The possibility of this happening is very real. If we want to tip the scales in favour of the global village rather than global conflict, certain countries must assume some responsibility and get involved. Canada owes its very sound reputation to some degree to its level of involvement. That is why I would support a decision to have our troops remain in Bosnia.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Would the member for Central Nova like to make a reply to that or take it as a comment?

Ms. Skoke: I will take it as a comment.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Central Nova. I get the impression from her statement that she does not have a very high opinion of the reputation Canada has developed in the field of peacekeeping in the last forty years, since the end of World War II. What about the initiatives of Mr. Pearson and the Nobel Peace Prize he received? I am wondering if her suggestion that Canada withdraw its troops from Bosnia now—a suggestion which may seem totally justified given the prevailing climate of uncertainty about the mandate of our troops there—may be somewhat premature and whether it might lead to regrettable action which could tarnish Canada's image abroad. Did the hon. member for Central Nova take into account this aspect of the issue before calling for the withdrawal of Canadian troops?

[English]

Ms. Skoke: Mr. Speaker, most certainly in preparing my speech I have taken into consideration the various options. I think I indicated three in my speech, one being to retain the status quo. In so doing obviously we have to consider our position internationally and our credibility as far as Canada is concerned. The second option I presented was that of modification of a commitment, and the third option would be that of total withdrawal.

• (1850)

I repeat the same question I asked in my speech. We must ask ourselves what is the nature of peacekeeping when there is no peace to keep. I feel that is the issue here.