

*Government Orders*

• (1145)

If this were to be our decision, it must be made absolutely clear that Canada is not withdrawing because the going is rough. Canadians have demonstrated their mettle in two world wars, the Korean war and many peacekeeping actions over the years. They have demonstrated it in Bosnia. Our forces have clearly indicated their willingness to remain involved. Continuing along our present path seems to give little hope of a peaceful settlement. Rather it gives every indication of a commitment to remain and observe the civil war for many years to come.

The belligerents met in Geneva to talk on January 18 and 19, but proceedings collapsed. More talks are scheduled in Geneva on February 10. I submit that it is time for Canada to take the lead by hosting a conference here in Ottawa in early February, before that Geneva meeting, to include all countries with forces currently committed in the former Yugoslavia. At this conference, Canada should urge that the UN issue a clear and unequivocal ultimatum to the belligerents. Either accept moves to achieve and enforceable peaceful solution or accept the withdrawal of UN forces.

Should the conference not agree, Canada should state that unless definite progress toward peace happens in Bosnia prior to then, it is our intention to withdraw our troops in April when our current commitment is completed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to understand the comments made by my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands, particularly when he says that the people involved in this conflict share the same ethnicity, while we know they have followed quite different historical paths over the last 500 years. It is precisely the federal state imposed upon them at some point which has collapsed in the new international context. Their situation has been widely acknowledged by the United Nations which recognized Bosnia's independence; and the search for some form of agreement is at the heart of the peace efforts. Withdrawal at this juncture in the crisis would quite simply result in the virtual elimination of the Bosnians. I cannot understand the member's reasoning. I wish he would try to explain it to me.

[English]

**Mr. Frazer:** Mr. Speaker, if we go back far enough in the origins of the area, we find that all the residents are basically Slavs. Over the years, they have been affected by outside influences which have caused them to go in different directions to different religions. When I referred to their common ethnicity, I meant going back a long way. Obviously there are substantial and very violent differences between them at the moment. The fact that Bosnia was recognized has been considered by

some to have been a mistake, that in fact the outcome which has happened was inevitable.

It is my understanding the Muslims are acquiring quite a heavy weapon stock so we are soon likely to see an increase in armed activity on their side. While the disparity of the surrounding nations unquestionably bears on the numbers of Serbs around, I think within Bosnia itself the Muslims will be able to make a rather good account of themselves should it come to that. I hope very much that it does not.

Unless the world, and Canada in particular, takes a stance which involves the requirement for these people to accommodate, to concede, to compromise in the Canadian tradition, that nothing will happen and we will see the thing go on forever.

• (1150)

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to question the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands with respect to the position that he has taken.

I returned a few days ago from Croatia myself. I met not only with UN commanders there but also with our Canadian troops both in sector south and elsewhere. Our troops are profoundly opposed to the suggestion that Canada would simply give notice that we would pull out after the mandate expires at the end of March.

It is their position that this would result in an incredible increase in the level of bloodshed and violence and that the very important humanitarian work they are doing in helping to bring in and escort NGOs and bringing in food and medicine would be profoundly jeopardized. Many innocent people would die and would starve.

In view of the concerns of our people and NGOs on the ground and the United Nations about this proposal, what exactly is the member suggesting in terms of compromises and concessions? He said that all parties should make compromises and concessions.

The Bosnian Serbs and Radovan Karadzic have been very clear. They control 70 per cent of the territory of Bosnia—Herzegovina. They are about a third of the population. What concessions are they prepared to make now?

If Canada simply gives notice that we are going to pull out and other United Nations troops pull out as well then not only will they consolidate their position but quite clearly it seems to me that the risk of widespread bloodshed, destruction and starvation is far greater.

My second brief question is this. What about Croatia? What is the hon. member suggesting with respect to the role of the UN in Croatia?

**Mr. Frazer:** Mr. Speaker, I said during my remarks there are no easy solutions to the dilemma that we are in. I recognize what