

*Special Debate*

Peace enforcement is, in fact, one of the tasks set out for the organization by the Secretary-General in his report last summer "Agenda for Peace". We applauded that report when it was issued and we have been trying ever since to ensure that the Secretary-General's ideas get wide circulation and thorough analysis.

Now, under tragic circumstances, we will be putting some of those ideas into practice.

In the final analysis, what really counts is to put an end to the banditry and the lawlessness that makes the delivery of food, medicine and essentials impossible to those who need them. Thousands of men, women and children are dying of starvation. The Secretary-General and the United Nations decided rightly that vigorous action is required and we support that course of action.

• (1850)

We realize, just as the Secretary-General does, that military enforcement to secure humanitarian aid is not an end in itself. The enforcement action in Somalia must ultimately facilitate a process of political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations but brought about by the people themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and all the members of this House that beyond this military operation Canada will work with the Secretary-General and with others in the international community to help find a durable political solution to this conflict that is in the interests of the Somali people, through diplomatic means and through direct assistance.

Rebuilding civil society and national government in Somalia is not going to happen overnight. The devastation has been far too great. Sadly, it will be a long-term process, in which Somalis themselves will have to take the initiative, together with patient and substantial international support.

It is essential that the military action in Somalia that we have undertaken to join be balanced by UN efforts to promote peace and reconciliation. In some parts of Somalia, such as the northeast, conditions are relatively stable and co-operation does exist for peacekeeping, relief and rehabilitation efforts, so that they may begin.

It is the season when we celebrate peace and when there are so many holidays and celebrations around the

world of joy, of a family nature and of a religious nature. Most Somalis also long for peace. They desperately want civil order, and they are willing and prepared to seek a long-term political solution to their internal differences. They also do not want to face weapons and rifles every day as they walk down their streets and paths.

In this regard I am encouraged by the results of the just concluded UN meeting on aid to Somalia that was held in Addis Ababa.

In what is a very bleak and disturbing situation we find one inspiring example after another of courage and devotion to humanity, some by the Somalis themselves, who must have more courage than anyone else. However, I am referring as well to the many international aid workers who have been braving the violence and horror in Somalia, some of them Canadians, to bring relief to the innocent victims of this conflict. They are also uppermost in our minds as we undertake this operation.

I fully support the Secretary-General's position, and I know that members of this House do, that military action must take into full account the security of international civilians and that their safety must be a primary consideration in the enforcement action.

This is, in the season of peace, more than a mission of enforcement. It is a mission of peace. It is a mission of mercy for tens of thousands of our fellow human beings who are living in terror, who are too weak and are moving toward death.

Once again, Canada has been called upon to do its part. Canada must do its part. Canada will do its part. Make no mistake about it, we are determined that this mission will succeed. We will show the people of Somalia that we are ready, that we are able to answer their desperate cries for help as they reach out to us, and finally that we are able to reach back to them.

In the name of peace and humanity, I ask this House and all Canadians to support our decision, as they have since we first moved into this phase of our operations on Friday. I have been touched and overwhelmed by the expressions of support, both from members of this House on all sides as well as from people across Canada who have been urging us and are now pleased that we are saying yes we can and we will do more.