

*Special Debate*

their budgets cut by this government. Clearly that too is unacceptable.

I think that we as Canadians have the right to ask as well within the context of the United Nations: What about consistency? There is a human tragedy unfolding in Bosnia. Surely if the United Nations is prepared to act and to act vigorously and pursuant to an international mandate to the Security Council in Somalia, there are other crises including the crises in Bosnia, Liberia and elsewhere that must be addressed as well. There cannot be one standard in Somalia and another in Bosnia where genocide is unquestionably taking place.

In the longer term, we may very well have to look at a role for the United Nations in terms of some form of trusteeship in Somalia to help to restore civil society, to look at the possibility of an international conference under United Nations auspices to bring together the various parties to try to arrive at a permanent and lasting solution.

The final point I want to make is again to underline the risks in this operation. It was an old Somali proverb which stated that all Somalis will ban together against the non-Somali intruder. The fear of course is that if this operation goes wrong, what could happen is that the various warring clans might come together not only against the United Nations, but against the some 400 international aid workers as well with tragic consequences.

We join in applauding the courage and the dedication of the Canadian troops which will be working in Somalia, the Canadian Airborne Regiment. We wish them well. We think of their families at this very difficult time and certainly we hope for a solution that will not only bring badly needed humanitarian aid, food and drugs to that region but as well will involve the rebuilding of a civil society and a government for the people of Somalia.

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is right to offer troops to the United Nations rescue operation in Somalia. The situation there is ghastly and the reality of the famine and the external wars has left limited choices and left the entire people in peril.

It is impossible to remain aloof while gangs of undisciplined bandits operating for their own profit only are

able to impede the delivery of emergency food and medicines to those Somalis who have need of that food and those medicines.

If we are to believe the reports that we hear, and we have no reason to disbelieve, we are told that thousands or more people are dying every day and that up to two million lives are at risk. Boutros Boutros-Ghali last week informed the United Nations that if food is to reach those trapped by the war situation in Somalia, there is no alternative but to use either the threat of force or to use actual force.

Much as many of us abhor supporting armed intervention, when it is the only way to save millions of innocents from death by starvation or disease, we are forced to support it. Now the government must do what it can to make sure that what the United Nations is doing and what we are taking part in is done right and that any action taken by the United Nations sanctioned force is not done in vain. We have a responsibility if we are going to be part of this intervention by the military that when it is over the country will not revert to its present chaotic state.

We also have a responsibility to do right for another important reason. Somalia is not the only humanitarian crisis in the world today. Others are, as mentioned by my colleague, Bosnia, Liberia, the Sudan. These are situations that are crying out for solutions. The United Nations is entering into the new era of peacekeeping and peacemaking. It would seem that we are moving into a more interventionist mode. A well-intentioned but badly conducted operation in Somalia could set a wrong precedent and make it more difficult or even impossible for the United Nations to intervene on the side of peace and humanitarian treatment of the people in the future.

It worries me that this initiative seems to be so U.S. driven, so Bush driven if you wish. It seems to me that the need for the United Nations has never been greater in the world. Only through the collective initiatives of the nations of the world will we be able to seize the new avenues of opportunity to address the problems of today and of tomorrow; not just issues such as Somalia, Yugoslavia, the Middle East, but all of the tensions that are caused by poverty, by the population explosion,