

*Oral Questions*

direct contact with him for the last number of days. We have heard indirectly from our sources in Sarajevo that he is okay. We are trying to confirm this and we are trying to work through third parties such as the Red Cross to ascertain his true condition.

With respect to Captain Rechner, I dealt with that yesterday. There has been no change. There has been no change with the other people who have been detained and held hostage in Ilijas.

With respect to the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think we have made our position quite clear. There is no requirement at this time to send additional Canadian forces. None have been sought by the United Nations.

I should point out that the secretary-general of the UN a few moments ago called for the gradual reduction or scaling down of the UNPROFOR mandate so that it could be reprofiled in a way to carry out those tasks that it could best be suited to carry out. This mirrors the position that has been taken not only by Canada but by many of our allies.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister just referred to an important statement from UN headquarters. We know that Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed scaling down the number of troops while at the same time redeploying on site resources.

I want to ask the minister what the Canadian government's position is, and perhaps he could tell us, not about what other countries think and do and the meetings that will take place but about what the Canadian government thinks and what it intends to do.

[English]

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the secretary-general flatly rejected a withdrawal from Bosnia, as has been advocated by some. He flatly rejected the status quo. He is talking about a redefinition of the UNPROFOR mandate in that country, and that is the position of Canada.

As to how we do it, that will become evident in the next few days. As the House will know, my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is meeting today with his counterparts. A meeting has been called by the Prime Minister of France for defence ministers on Saturday. I shall represent Canada there with the chief of defence staff. We will try to see how we can adapt our positions into a common front to deal with what I think is the emerging consensus, one that we enunciated in the House in the last few days, that the UNPROFOR mandate is still valid. It can still work, but there has to be some reshaping or redefining of the mandate to lessen the exposure for the troops that are concerned.

• (1420)

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there is of course the very delicate matter of deciding whether to send more troops. I realize the government wishes to tread very carefully in this respect. However, there is also the matter of adequate equipment. We know that on a number of occasions, Canadian soldiers have mentioned the problems they had due to inadequate equipment.

I want to ask the minister whether he would agree that any delay by the government in sending our troops adequate equipment will expose them to further hostage taking?

[English]

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the charges about equipment are simply charges that no longer bear reality. Whether it is helmets, reinforced flak jackets for the very difficult situations, reinforced turrets of our M-113 armoured personnel carriers and other equipment including very modern machine guns, we believe the troops in the last number of months have been given additional resources that give them better protection for more dangerous situations.

That does not mean to say that we cannot improve that equipment. However, with respect to sending heavy armour, artillery and all of the rest of the paraphernalia of a greater entwining in a conflict over there, that is something that is not part of the government's agenda at this time. It may very well be part of the government's agenda should there be an eventual withdrawal, but that withdrawal would have to be all-encompassing, requested by the UN and discharged by NATO. At that time we will be prepared to add additional resources to effect the evacuation of Bosnia.

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[Translation]

### CARE CANADA

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

A CBC program reported that, in addition to spending donations from the public extravagantly, the \$300,000 that Care Canada raised in its campaign to relieve hunger in Somalia never made it to its destination. Given the seriousness of the allegations and Ottawa's financial support of Care Canada, the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa has announced the government's intention to investigate this agency.

Ottawa funded Care Canada to the tune of \$28 million in 1993. Therefore, will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether the federal government's grants to Care Canada, especially its