

Government Orders

Croatia and the command here, but these are comments that not only I have heard but have been expressed throughout the command structure in the armed forces and we are trying to deal with them.

The problem is that some of these supply routes are very difficult especially in winter conditions not unlike some of the conditions we see outside the Parliament Buildings. They do not, however, have snowploughs, salt trucks and sand trucks which makes it very dangerous. In fact two of our members from le 2^e Régiment de Valcartier died a few weeks ago just before Christmas because of traffic accidents.

There is no question that better equipment and better provisions will obviously help our troops. I think the comments the hon. member is making are in a sense a wish list of improvements that any commander on the ground would like to see. I do not think it is any evidence of a lack of being properly prepared to take on the very onerous duties that they are undertaking.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister might comment on just the priority that the defence department itself feels should be assigned to international peacekeeping. As we look at the military we really see that it is being asked to perform four functions on about \$12 billion: the protection of Canadian sovereignty; the participation in European security through NATO; international peacekeeping; and of course the backing up of the civil authority in cases like Oka.

I wonder if the minister could comment on just where he sees international peacekeeping and peace enforcement in that list of priorities. It looks like we are asking the military to do a lot of things.

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member for Calgary Southwest and leader of the Reform Party raised his question. As was mentioned by my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, earlier in the debate, there will be defence and foreign policy reviews. These long range questions should really be addressed within that context. I hope that today's specific debates, because of the urgency of the peacekeeping and because of our urgency in dealing with the question of cruise missile tests, do not undermine those particular reviews that will take the balance of the year to complete.

The questions that he posed are very valid. Hopefully the committee will give us in government ideas on where we should be emphasizing our money and personnel in the years to come.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege for me to speak on this matter which I consider to be of great importance, as no doubt do all of my colleagues in this House.

Representatives of the various political parties have thus far expressed at times similar, at times opposing, views. Technical explanations have also been provided about different things, whether it be with respect to monetary issues, to equipment or to adjustments in the strength of our troops abroad.

• (1235)

It is my fervent wish to help this House come to an enlightened decision on international policy as regards UN missions.

In an effort to understand this contentious mission, I, like each one of you I trust, reviewed the history of the former Yugoslavia which, over the months and years, has splintered into several independent nations, namely Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, as mentioned several times by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence.

How did a federation that had survived for more than 40 years come to this end? National division was undoubtedly emphasized by political ideals, territory and culture. What explanation can there be, however, for the slaughter involving more often than not innocent civilians? The answer is not simple as each warring faction believes it has the legitimate right to reclaim land which it feels is rightfully its own.

The warring factions believe so strongly in their legitimate right to act that they sometimes feel the UN has no right to intervene or, at the very least, they occasionally challenge the UN's presence by refusing to cease hostilities.

The nations of the world have seen on television and read in the press the number of casualties and rapes, to the point where no one can remain indifferent to this situation. And therein lies the problem. What steps should the United Nations and, by the same token Canada, take in their quest for a better, more humane world in order to put an end to this shameful situation?

Following World War II, the United Nations were established as an organization founded on the principles of international peacekeeping and security. This organization is taking collective, effective steps to prevent threats to peace and to counter any act of aggression through peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of international law and justice.

The United Nations supports the forging of friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights among peoples and their right to self-determination.

Canada must continue in its traditional role of peacekeeper. Canada's role is to maintain peace, not enforce it, as this would be a major shift away from Canada's historic role.

The peacekeepers should remain in Bosnia in order to continue protecting humanitarian relief convoys and we should recognize, despite media reports, the excellent work they are doing in helping to save Bosnian lives. We must also acknowledge the contributions of our soldiers.