

Special Debate

This has not only been a great challenge for the United Nations. It has created frustration for many as well. This is the largest UN operation to date. Therefore, it undoubtedly demands the greatest cohesion and togetherness we are going to see in a UN operation probably since the Korean war.

We have had many fires to put out along the road of international history over the last half century since the founding of the United Nations, but this is not a time to let go of the traces. It is not a time to stop pulling for peace in the world for which we all strive.

There is a Chinese proverb which says that fury is nothing but the energy of weakness. Nothing exemplifies this statement any better than the ongoing circumstances in the former Yugoslavia. There is another saying that ignorance never settles a question. It simply keeps the argument all stirred up.

I love reading history. J. M. S. Careless wrote the book *Canada—A Story of Challenge*. The 19th chapter deals with a maturing nation. We must remember tonight that many people came from countries across Europe in the early days to settle in Canada. They came here to find peace, a place where they could make a life for their families. As we stand here tonight in the House we certainly can understand very well how many people in disturbed parts of the world must be looking forward to the days when they can see some peace.

Canada has worked on behalf of refugees, the children's fund, humanitarian supplies. We have put troops into very difficult situations. We have had an international airlift from Italy in Sarajevo since July 1992. The Canadian forces Hercules 130 transport planes have been busy with 1,600 flights, 11,300 passengers and 26,600 tonnes of food and medical supplies into Sarajevo. That is a small part of what our Canadian forces have done.

Tonight it behoves all of us to take into consideration the work that has been done to date. We must stand firm and work with our partners in the United Nations toward the goal of the UN for which it was founded half a century ago: to try to bring peace to mankind and some sanity to the world.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for the three hours set aside for the debate.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek unanimous consent of the House to extend the debate for myself and the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

• (2130)

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We also have two members who sat here all evening, participating and listening very carefully. I am wondering whether you could seek agreement to extend the debate to allow the remaining speakers

time but limit the debate to maybe five minutes each, which would not go beyond 9.50 p.m. or 10 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Certain members have indicated they wish to speak. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not with pleasure that I join the debate. I am certain all members present do not find much joy in debating this subject. We have debated the topic several times. Parliament has sat late to debate our role in the former Yugoslavia.

This time as I listened to members from all political parties I sensed a sense of weariness with what our role has been. There is more weariness now than I heard in previous debates.

The Reform Party is calling for our troops to be brought home. The minister of defence made it abundantly clear in his remarks that even if he recommits our troops it would only be for a limited period of time.

The Leader of the Opposition talked in terms of renewing our mandate because there is not much choice. The views expressed by the members of the House really reflect the mood in the country from coast to coast.

The lack of progress in ending hostilities, the ongoing flagrant denial of basic human rights while our troops under the UN command stand helplessly by, the incidents in which our troops were detained and humiliated as well as our budgetary problems have all added to the sense of weariness.

What are we doing there is the basic fundamental question that gets asked. It is important for us and for Canadians to realize the tremendous job Canadian troops have done. There would have been a lot more death, destruction, carnage, rape and denial of basic civilized human rights had there not been the United Nations and the Canadian troops present.

It is hard to quantify that but let there be no doubt Canadian troops have saved innocent lives. It is important that all Canadians tip their hats to the men and women both in the RCMP and in our military who have done a very professional job. Canada can be proud of them.

The frustration we feel is also the frustration the Croatian people feel. I and two other members of the House visited Croatia in June 1994. We talked to its foreign minister as well as members of its Parliament. Overwhelmingly they talked in terms of ending the Vance peace agreement of 1994, the mandate by which UNPROFOR forces are in Croatia.

The Croatians have the same fear the minister of defence expressed, that this becomes a permanent situation. Under the original agreement the local Serb groups were to be disarmed. There was to be UN monitoring and taking over heavy armaments. Non-Serbs were to be allowed back home. None of this has happened. The concern is this present occupation of almost