

*Special Debate*

[English]

Sadly, over the past several weeks it became clear that humanitarian operations in southern and central Somalia could not overcome the problems of obstruction, looting and extortion by heavily armed bandits. The United Nations was unable to secure the concurrence of Somali factions for the deployment of peacekeepers in key areas of the country where the fighting is going on.

The size of the UN security force was inadequate to secure humanitarian operations. The United Nations Secretary General explicitly acknowledged these critical shortcomings in his letter to the President of the Security Council on November 24.

[Translation]

In this letter, the Secretary General gave three reasons for reviewing the premises and principles of the peacekeeping mission (UNOSOM): first, the absence of a government in Somalia; second, the extortion, blackmail and looting with which international aid workers were confronted; and third, the attacks against UN personnel and equipment and other organizations providing humanitarian aid.

In another letter addressed to the president of the Security Council on November 29, the Secretary General begged the council to urgently consider a number of options for dealing with the situation. One of the options was to maintain and reinforce UNOSOM. The secretary advised against this option because, as he said: "Pursuing UNOSOM operations in the present circumstances would not provide a satisfactory solution to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia".

The Secretary-General concluded that more energetic measures had to be taken as soon as possible.

Another option submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General and recommended by the latter was resorting to coercive action as provided under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. This proposal was approved unanimously by the Security Council last Thursday.

[English]

To request contributions of forces and funds from all member states was one of those four main elements. To establish an enforcement operation under American

command which has authorized use of all means necessary to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.

Third, to authorize the continued existence of UNOSOM, which will be at the discretion of the Secretary General. He will decide when and where to employ UNOSOM peacekeepers, most likely only when order has been re-established in Somalia.

Finally, to ensure close and effective co-ordination between the United Nations, UNOSOM and the unified command led by the United Nations.

When this government originally decided to contribute 750 peacekeepers to UNOSOM, we felt not only that such a contribution was consistent with our peacekeeping tradition, but that it would be constructive in helping to relieve the misery in Somalia.

Thus, in spite of the serious financial and personnel implications, we believed it was important for Canada to support this UN mission.

Last Friday, my cabinet colleagues and I had to review our original decision in light of recent developments. After full consultation with the Secretary-General, we agreed to participate in the enforcement mission.

We did so because we concluded that only such a mission as this can effectively put an end to the rule of warlords. Only such a mission can restore sufficient order that the hungry can be fed, the sick can have medicine and the injured can have treatment.

Only such a mission can create the kind of environment necessary so that work can begin toward a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the internal political conflict and toward the reconstruction of this nation by the Somalis themselves.

There is an international consensus that such a mission can yield the desired results in a timely way. Speaking to the Security Council last Thursday night, the representative of Morocco thanked the council for passing a resolution that meets the fervent request of so many African and Muslim nations.

By responding to the Security Council in this way, Canada is building on its traditional peacekeeping role. At the same time, we are helping to develop as we said we would the capacity of the UN to meet threats to international peace and security in new ways.