

Special Debate

aid community have expressed concerns about the potential impact of a massive military intervention on the safety of international aid workers, particularly one under the United States leadership.

I think it is important that we recognize the context here today, that some 300,000 people have died in Somalia this year alone from starvation, disease and warfare. Almost a third of the population, two million people, are threatened with starvation and 250,000 to 300,000 could die before Christmas without any help.

It is also important that we not forget our history, that we recognize for 10 years, from 1977 to 1987, the United States poured almost \$800 million into this client state. There were massive weapons supplies dumped into that particular region. Of course, there was the propping up of a corrupt and increasingly brutal Siyad Barre. When he collapsed, they walked away but they left behind weapons.

There were massive quantities of weapons: mortars, air-to-ground rockets, plastics explosives, M-16 rifles and tens of thousands of mines. These weapons used against the people of Somalia by Siyad Barre had been supplied by the United States. Therefore, it is essential that we recognize the history, the fact that the international community has a responsibility here.

Certainly we would have preferred, as indeed the Secretary-General himself indicated in his letter to the United Nations, that there be a country-wide enforcement operation under United Nations command and control. Unfortunately, according to Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, the UN does not at present have the capability to command and control an enforcement operation of the size and urgency required by the present crisis in Somalia.

One of the reasons for that is the fact that the United States has not paid its dues. It has not paid its peacekeeping commitments for too many years, which is certainly an essential element of any lasting change in the approach of the United Nations. There must be a recognition that the principles set out by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in the Agenda for Peace earlier this year must become a reality.

There must be a United Nations standing army so that we do not have to depend on *ad hoc* decisions by the United States or by other countries. We must also recognize that there remain many questions about the nature of this operation. Indeed, it is essential that

humanitarian aid be provided to those who are starving literally by the thousands, but what exactly is the scope of this operation?

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has pointed out that in addition to getting humanitarian aid through, in his words it is going to be essential for "at least the heavy weapons of the organized factions to be neutralized and brought under international control and for the irregular forces and gangs to be disarmed".

That is a very dangerous and risky operation. The lives of Canadian men and women are clearly at risk and many questions remain unanswered about the scope and mandate of this operation. What is essential is that there be a rebuilding of civil society in Somalia. Somalia is basically a country without a government. It is a country in a state of anarchy.

Africa Watch has pointed out the importance of rebuilding a civil society and the importance of the United Nations working together with those elements of Somalia society that in fact have survived the ravages of Siyad Barre. They include the Somali Red Crescent, informal organizations of Somalis that have distributed food, cared for the sick, the wounded, for children, the elderly and the traditional clan elders.

I believe it to be profoundly tragic that the former United Nations special envoy for Somalia, Mohamed Sahnoun, who had been negotiating effectively with all elements of Somali society to secure an end to the conflict and to protect the relief effort and was negotiating with traditional Somali clan elders, was pulled out of that particular region.

It is essential that there be a resumption of political dialogue and negotiations under United Nations leadership. Canada can play an important role in that process. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has said that Canada will participate in the initial humanitarian intervention and then will pull out. We will not participate in the ongoing peacekeeping efforts.

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What will our role be internationally after we have pulled out from Somalia? What will our role be in working with the NGOs which, under the government's recent economic statement, are going to have their budgets slashed? The very NGOs, Oxfam, Care Canada and other NGOs that are working in the field and to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude are having