

*Government Orders*

Should we consider letting our troops use force to take control of the country and to subjugate the belligerents? Should our troops use violence for humanitarian reasons? Should they occupy the area to impose our peace? No, because to do so would be to forget the important lessons of history, namely that no occupation force can be a substitute for an agreement truly recognized by the parties involved.

[English]

Furthermore, if this government would authorize our troops to make use of force to impose reason onto the fighting factions, we would depart dramatically with our pacifist traditions that honour Canada and that are so dear to the people from Quebec as to those from all provinces I am sure.

[Translation]

What is the mandate of our troops in Bosnia? Unfortunately, this House does not have a magic solution to solve the problem in Bosnia and to improve the prospects of the people there. However, this House can and must define the mandate of our peacekeepers in Bosnia. We owe it to our troops stationed over there, to their families waiting here, to Quebecers and Canadians, and to the international community.

So what is the mandate of our troops in Bosnia? Mr. Speaker, while reflecting on this issue, I came across a dilemma, like many other members who have thought about this issue and have expressed their views here today. Today, by acting as a buffer between the warring factions, are the United Nations not protecting the belligerents from the consequences of their acts? In other words, does the peacekeepers' presence unduly and unnecessarily prolong the agony of those people? Would it not be better to have the peacekeepers withdraw from the area, leaving the belligerents alone to face the atrocities and the consequences of their acts? Would our absence perhaps more conducive to a resolution of this conflict?

• (2025)

One thing is certain: far from being observers without influence in this military and political game of chess, UN troops have an impact on the situation through the direct and important role they play.

What we must do is consider whether the process of resolving the conflict is helped by the presence of our peacekeepers. Is their presence an asset or a liability?

I think the debate should focus on a third dimension which I will discuss now. Consider the results obtained so far. Without peacekeepers the conflict would very likely have spread to the entire region of Eastern Europe, like a replay of World War I. However, this conflict has not only been contained but has gradually been confined to a very limited area. The presence of

the peacekeepers has given diplomacy and peace a chance to make some progress, bit by bit.

But there is more. The presence of the peacekeepers has afforded civilian populations real protection in a terrible war and alleviated their suffering significantly. This was not done without serious difficulty. Convoys of food and medicine were held up, supplies diverted to the black market, soldiers threatened by belligerents and some soldiers, unfortunately, were killed. On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of people received food and medical care and managed to survive.

At this point I would like to share with you and with the members of this House what I was told recently by the wife of one of our soldiers who is now in Bosnia. This lady told me that her husband had been very moved by the terrible living conditions of the people over there. She told me how her husband took off his socks and gave them to a child who was walking barefoot in the snow. This was only a few days before Christmas. The public in Quebec and Canada is also worried about the cost of our operations in Bosnia.

I did some research. I did some simple arithmetic, and I can assure you that the costs directly related to the presence of our soldiers in Bosnia represent only about 25 cents per month per person in Quebec and Canada, 25 cents, for an annual total of \$120 million. Twenty-five cents per person per month. I think our fellow citizens can afford to contribute a quarter to help people in need.

What is the role of our peacekeepers in a new world order? First of all, their role will certainly not be that of a global cop. That is out of the question, because it would be entirely counterproductive. Obviously, their role is no longer limited to peacekeeping in areas where the parties have decided to resolve their differences.

We must consider a new role, a role for the twenty-first century. As nations struggle towards democracy, this new role would be to prevent conflicts from escalating and spreading, to protect and help civilian populations and to provide diplomatic efforts with a climate conducive to conflict resolution and durable peace.

• (2030)

The new role of Canada in this regard will be not only to participate in peacekeeping, something we are already doing, but to guarantee in the field, proactively and peacefully, protection and assistance to civilian populations in distress, while diplomats try to come up with a formula establishing peaceful relations between populations at war. The new role of Canada should not be limited to peacekeeping, it should also focus on peacebuilding and peacemaking.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, Canada should not withdraw from peacekeeping operations. Quebecers and Canadians of all provinces have a long tradition of peace, and our peacekeepers will