

The disturbing events of the past year in Bosnia-Hercegovina and other parts of the former Yugoslavia suggest that the lessons of the 20th century have gone unheeded. While survivors of the Nazi Holocaust are forced to remain vigilant to ensure that the memories of their loved ones are not forgotten or denied by those who would rewrite history, the world is confronted with many of the same elements of an all too familiar pattern a half a century later -- inhumane detention camps, ethnic cleansing, immoral political and military leadership, and an international community that often seems paralysed when faced with tragedy and horror.

At the July meeting in Helsinki of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, I made the comparison between what is happening in the former Yugoslavia and what happened in Nazi Europe during the Second World War. Some people, at the time, suggested that my comments were exaggerated and alarmist. They turned out to be all too accurate.

In the past several weeks, a number of missions including one that included two Canadian observers have confirmed our worst fears. Thousands and thousands of people are being held in Bosnia-Hercegovina against their will, poorly housed, poorly fed, without medical care, and facing increasingly desperate conditions as winter approaches. And still the political wrangling and posturing continues, and day by day a nation dies and thousands of people die with it.

Not that the world has remained indifferent. There have been a number of initiatives undertaken to end the crisis, with Canada often in the forefront. Perhaps the most visible was our peacekeeping effort under Major-General Lewis MacKenzie to open up the airport in Sarajevo for humanitarian assistance. Canada has pledged an additional 1,200 troops to augment the forces that the United Nations deploys in the region. We have also contributed over \$25 million in humanitarian relief, and participated in both diplomatic and economic endeavours to end the terror and destruction. And, here in Canada, we have established a generous program to reunite families from the war-torn zones.

But still the fighting continues, and peace remains only a distant possibility.

People occasionally ask: "Why should we in Canada care so much about what is happening so far away?" and "Why don't we look after things in Canada first?"

At one time, these might have been reasonable questions -- it was possible to live some sort of isolated, self-sufficient life, remote from events in another hemisphere. But that time is long past. One cannot put one's head in the sand and hope that the world will go away.