

Oral Questions

countries that are in a conflict situation or any country that is in a conflict situation either with another state or with its internal population.

We have not yet seen the report to which the member refers. It has not been made public to us but we will be reviewing it as soon as it is made available to the government.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): But this was reported in the press yesterday, Mr. Speaker. This study also shows that Canada is the seventh largest supplier of military weapons to third world countries.

My supplementary is for the Minister of National Defence. Are we to understand that this violation of arms trade regulations by the Canadian government is totally in line with its new foreign policy, which puts trade before human rights?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only say that the report which was reported upon in the press yesterday has not been made publicly available to the government. We will be reviewing it when we do get that document.

The fact is that Canada supports the reduction of the production in trade of conventional weapons. We are very active on the international commitment to that. We are dialoguing with other nations to see what we can do.

We feel that the proliferation of conventional weapons is one of the most serious problems confronting our world and is causing so much of the conflict that we are having to address.

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BOSNIA

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have a defence minister who is sending a double message to Canadians. On one hand he is beating his chest and talking tough about a beefed up mission to Bosnia while in reality his poor leadership and defence cuts have reduced the morale and effectiveness of our military.

The minister cannot have it both ways. Is he going to cut the military or is he going to beef it up?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the critic for the Reform Party says that I have some explanations to give. Perhaps he would like to give an explanation to Canadians as to why he advocated yesterday on behalf of his party that Cana-

dians retreat from Bosnia, leave our hostages there and allow the rest to get him out.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Reformers or Canadians do not leave hostages behind when they conduct a retreat.

This morning, the Bosnian ambassador to the UN commented on the uselessness of the UN operation. He said: "Under these circumstances, the humanitarian mission is over". Considering this, will the Prime Minister admit that no humanitarian aid is getting through and that this reality is a direct contradiction to what he argued yesterday in this House?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it says something about the state of the Reform Party that the hon. foreign affairs critic seems to know a lot about the science of retreat. Perhaps he would like to edify the House as to how that will apply to other Reform Party policies.

The fact is that we are not going to leave those people in the former Yugoslavia to brutality, to torture or to carnage. We believe we have an obligation as part of the United Nations mandate to help bring some stability to that area. We are certainly not going to do anything to endanger the safety of our captured troops, least of all retreat.

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• (1435)

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The people of Saint-Siméon and the surrounding area in the Charlevoix riding, are bracing themselves for the unemployment insurance reforms imposed by the minister in the February 1994 budget. These dramatic reforms are hitting them very hard. Entire families have been forced onto social assistance, because of the inadequacy of the unemployment insurance system.

Does the minister realize that his reforms have pushed thousands of citizens, like those of Saint-Siméon, closer to misery, and that he must revoke these cuts in order to stop thousands of unemployed people from flocking to social assistance.

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have pointed out in the House in the past, our changes to the unemployment insurance provide a substantially higher benefit for low income unemployment insurance claimants. In the last account I think some 280,000 Canadians, including 80,000 in the province of Quebec alone,