

Government Orders

the securing of some sort of enforceable agreement in Bosnia however frail by the end of the year.

Third, Canada should consider withdrawal only as a measure of last resort if these first objectives could not be obtained. It is my hope that these modest observations may be of some help to the government in framing a general policy on Canada's future peacekeeping role and in arriving at a particular policy with respect to our continued involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

[Translation]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is twofold but I will be brief in order to enable the hon. member for Calgary Southwest and leader of the Reform Party to provide an answer.

At the beginning of his speech, the hon. member said that we should establish criteria to decide when Canada should participate in international missions. Would the hon. member specify which criteria he would like to use in the present case? Also, at the end of his speech, the hon. member suggested—at least it is my understand, but I would like some clarification—that Canadian troops could stay there under certain conditions. If these conditions, and I believe there are three, are fulfilled, does the hon. member for Calgary Southwest suggest that Canadian troops should stay in the former Yugoslavia?

[English]

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to both of these questions is the same. I was attempting to suggest whether we could define certain criteria that would govern whether Canada participated or not in a peacekeeping operation and if it did decide to do that, whether to remain. In the minister's statement this morning one will notice that he listed the four or five guidelines that we have used in the past and I think a number of those are adequate.

• (1635)

The one that I would suggest refining is perhaps Canada insisting more than we have in the past of an adequate command structure and logistical support structure for any peacekeeping operations that we get into. I do believe a number of our own military people have suggested that if there is a weak link then the UN is good at getting a legal mandate to get in there but it is not so good at managing the on the spot command of logistics. I think maybe strengthening that one criterion would be a step in the right direction.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the thoughts of the leader of the Reform Party.

I would like to ask him if he could elaborate on his statement that we ought to distinguish between a conflict that is resolvable as compared to one that is not.

I think we have seen recently in our world some very ancient feuds such as the one between the Israelis and the PLO and indeed in northern Ireland which I remember hearing about from my grandmother. We have seen progress in some areas that perhaps people felt were unresolvable.

I ask the leader of the Reform Party if he could elaborate as to how he would make that very complex determination. I wonder if he could also address this fact. In his speaking to the humanitarian role we are playing there, that itself would seem to suggest that it is very difficult to determine when a conflict is resolvable and that we may well have a role to play as Canadians with our expertise in what superficially could appear to be thoroughly hopeless.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I did not mean to imply that the criteria should be whether the conflict is resolvable or unresolvable. If I did this then I was not communicating. I think the dilemma was pointed out with just having that as the criterion.

I was suggesting that perhaps we could set some modest expectations in situations that we get into. It is not that we are going to resolve some ancient conflict that has been going on for hundreds of years but even in the case of Bosnia would it be unrealistic to set the expectation? At least we would get some kind of shaky agreement like the one in Croatia which is hardly a peace agreement but it is better than what there is in Bosnia. If that was the expectation then at least a goal would be set. If one can get it then one can say that is grounds for continuing to proceed.

I am talking about extremely modest expectations but something that one can work toward as a criterion.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the last question that was asked.

We have heard a number of different perspectives from Reform Party members of Parliament who have spoken. I think that is a healthy thing.

However, I must say it has left me a little confused as to what the position is of the Reform Party or indeed if there is a position of the party as such. I want to ask the leader of the Reform Party to clarify the position.

We heard from the member for Calgary Southeast who said that in her opinion Canadian troops should pull out. The mandate expires on March 31 and Canadian troops should pull out because we are not able to fulfil a humanitarian role is what she said.

I want to ask the leader of the Reform Party very specifically if he agrees with the position taken by his colleague from Calgary Southeast. This position was taken as well as I under-