

*Government Orders*

There is a lesson in Yugoslavia. It is that multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-racial states can only be kept together in today's world by a codification of individual rights and by their protection with strong national institutions. Those national institutions and that constitutional protection has eroded in Yugoslavia and it has forced the rest of the world through the United Nations to try to salvage some dignity, some peace and some sense of humanitarian obligation to the people living in the former republics of Yugoslavia.

[Translation]

As the conflict in the Balkans escalated, the UN gradually extended its mandate beyond the borders of Croatia. For instance, the mission was asked to open the airport in Sarajevo.

I must say a few words about the President of France, François Mitterrand, who showed great courage when he visited Sarajevo two years ago.

[English]

The president of France demonstrated great courage in drawing the world's attention to the conflict in Yugoslavia. I would also join with my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in congratulating the people and government of France together with the British government for having supplied along with Canada the largest contingents of forces in Yugoslavia.

Today we have about 2,000 personnel in Bosnia and Croatia and that is one of the focuses, perhaps the principal focus for this particular debate. We care about them. These are our people. They are doing our bidding.

Canadians have played their part in two world wars and the Korean war. I do not think we want to be part of any other larger wars in the latter part of the century or as we go into the 21st century. It is the lessons that have been learned from our actions in those wars that lead Canadians to use their military expertise, their technical know-how and their understanding of conflicts to try to help the United Nations in bringing peace to some of the hot spots that we see today.

• (1220)

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of visiting our troops very briefly for a few days in December of last year. I was first in Croatia then in Sarajevo and Visoko and then with our ship HMCS *Iroquois* in the Adriatic which is enforcing the sanctions with other members of NATO and the United Nations.

I was struck by the uniformity of purpose and the unity with which our men and women view our role in Croatia and Bosnia. I did not hear from them one word about whether or not they had any doubts about the utility of being in that very difficult spot. At night when we slept in the camp at Visoko and shots rang out

and as we travelled to Sarajevo with shots all around us in our convoy, not one of those people exhibited any fear of the danger.

I can say that I had some fears. However, these men and women live with this every single day. They are prepared to follow the instructions of the Canadian people as expressed in Parliament and by the government. If we want them to come home then they will come home. If we want them to stay then they will stay. There is, however, no dissension on the part of our troops.

In fact, the deputy UN commander, General John MacInnis, is a Canadian and he has made some very courageous statements. There was one in the newspapers the other week about Srebrenica: "It is not for the Serbs or any of these factions to dictate what battalions or groups of soldiers can relieve others. We are not here to be dictated to by these factions. We will determine whether or not there will be Ukrainians or whether there will be Dutch or whether there will be Nordics or Malaysians that will replace our troops".

General MacInnis has the full support of the people under his command and I salute him and the work that he is doing. There is also the work of Colonel David Moore. Many in this House have heard him speak on radio and television. This is the gentleman in charge of our forces in Visoko, right in the centre of Bosnia. This is the gentleman who has to worry day and night about the safety of his people but more about the safety of the people in the surrounding areas.

Who can forget those graphic portrayals of our good work and our duty in keeping those hospitals open in Fojnica and Dakovica? When the civilians had to leave for fear of retaliation and death it was Canadian troops that kept those hospitals alive, whether it was washing laundry or whether it was bringing food. This was the real humanitarian side of the peacekeeping that our forces are doing in Bosnia.

I find it a little odd. I do not want to be critical of the news media or of Canadians in general or some commentators but it seems that a lot of people have only just become aware of the heightened danger that our troops face on a daily basis when the *New York Times* says there was danger. Maybe that says something about Canadians when we have to look at the *New York Times* to say whether or not something is dangerous. We have all known on this side that it has been dangerous. Our troops have known it is dangerous.

We cannot be intimidated by some of the actions that are going on on the ground every single day. There were two incidents last Sunday which we made public.

The troops there are working hard. They are devoted and they will continue to be there and work as hard as they can as long as we want them there. Therefore the views that are expressed today should not be taken lightly. I am not suggesting that