

*Special Debate*

I would like to begin by expressing my profound regret that we are tonight debating a motion on a decision that has already been taken. I cannot say too strongly how anti-democratic I feel this is, how arrogant it is of this government to have taken the decision and then to allow elected members to debate a decision already taken. The democratic process and the parliamentary system in this country are under much criticism. This is why. One's temptation is to ask: "Why would I participate in such a debate?"

• (1920 )

However, I and my party feel that the situation in Somalia transcends our own concerns about the inadequacy of this government in seeking out solutions and alternatives, not just giving information but trying to use the best resources in this House of Commons to find alternatives.

The question of when and how to use force is a serious decision, if not the most serious decision, that we as parliamentarians make. Clearly we are making decisions that affect the lives of young men and women. In the past, force has been used by the United Nations in cases in which international law has been broken. We are now being asked to give our consent to the use of force in order to ensure the success of international relief efforts.

In the case of Somalia, the New Democratic Party supports the proposed multilateral effort directed and authorized by the United Nations to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia. We must also point out that this is a precedent. This is a new direction. We are supporting the participation of Canada in this effort because we do not live in a perfect world. We know that if aid does not get to those areas where famine has been occurring, millions of human beings could die.

As New Democrats, as Canadians and as internationalists we cannot sit idly by and allow this to happen.

[*Translation*]

Canada has a long tradition of participating in peace-keeping missions. We must help stabilize the hostile situations on our planet and we now have an opportunity to do so.

A year ago, I spoke to a group interested in world peace and security and talked about the opportunities for

the United Nations and for civilization in the aftermath of the cold war and in this period of transition toward a new world order.

I explained then that the new world order suggested by some was nothing new. It is a world order which will be controlled by the industrialized nations in their interest and at the expense of developing nations.

I said that the consequences of this new world order for the vast majority of people on earth would be continued poverty, greater instability and, of course, an everpresent climate of insecurity.

I then suggested that we should replace the concept of a new world order with that of a new world community in which all nations on earth could work together in a new era of international cooperation.

[*English*]

The number one threat to security in the world is clearly poverty. In that respect, the government's cuts to its official development assistance to the world's poorest nations is regrettable and offensive. It is clear to us on this side of the House that there will never be peace in the world until we address ourselves to the fundamental issues of poverty throughout the world.

The efforts taken in Somalia could be a real opportunity to forge a new world community, in which our interest in ending hunger means as much as our desire for maintaining our supplies of oil, in which our interest in ending hunger does not fade when we no longer see people starving on television.

To a large degree, the efforts in Somalia could be an important step toward a new world community. However, I would be remiss if I did not point out some of my fundamental concerns with the way in which our government has handled this situation. At the same time, I would like to offer possible alternatives.

First, I am concerned about the apparent lack of a long-term solution. I am concerned about the uncertainty over the role of Canadian forces, the uncertainty as to the role of the United Nations, the United States and to whom the military forces will be accountable.

I am also concerned with the uncertainty over the timetable for the deployment of Canadian troops and the question of who pays and, as I mentioned before, the delayed after the fact consultation with Parliament.