

*Special Debate*

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to help deter possible aggression.

In the brief time I have this evening I want to talk about the situation in Croatia because it is becoming much more relevant to Canada and the Canadian position in the former Yugoslavia.

The conflict between Croatia and the Krajina-Serbs, as I said, has been at an impasse since 1992. At the root of the impasse is Croatia's determination to regain sovereignty over about 30 per cent of the territory held by the Krajina-Serbs who are reticent to disarm in the process.

Talks have been held under the auspices of the international conference on the former Yugoslavia in November 1993. A three-part strategy was set out to help resolve the problem.

[Translation]

First, a ceasefire had to be established, then discussions held on economic issues and, finally, agreement reached on a form of political reconciliation. This strategy permitted some progress.

In December 1993, the Croatian government and representatives of the Serbs in the area reached an agreement on setting up a series of ceasefires. At the end of March 1994, a general ceasefire agreement had been signed between the Croatian government and the Krajina-Serb authorities. UNPROFOR succeeded in making sure the agreement held, one of its various achievements in Croatia.

• (1830)

At the same time, this agreement caused considerable concern among the Croatian population. These people were afraid they would be victims of a situation like that persisting in Cyprus and were concerned that the country would be permanently divided by UNPROFOR.

[English]

Nonetheless, the general ceasefire did raise expectations that an economic agreement and ultimately a political settlement were within reach. Efforts to reach a lasting settlement in Croatia were dealt a shocking blow on January 12, 1995 when the Croatian president, Dr. Franjo Tudjman, informed the UN secretary-general that his government would not renew the mandate of UNPROFOR in Croatia beyond March 31.

President Tudjman said that Croatia's experience over the past two years had led him to conclude: "Although UNPROFOR has played an important role in stopping violence and major conflicts in Croatia, it is an indisputable fact that the present character of the UNPROFOR mission does not provide conditions necessary for establishing lasting peace and order in the republic of Croatia".

[Translation]

Before looking at the events in Croatia and at the United Nations following the dramatic statement by Mr. Tudjman, I would like to consider the diplomatic situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The efforts that went into resolving the conflict there paralleled the war itself.

At the start of 1994, Muslims and Croats in Bosnia reached an agreement resulting in a ceasefire and constituting a major step in establishing a federation encompassing the two groups.

[English]

This ceasefire continues to hold. It is monitored by UNPROFOR. In central Bosnia, CANBAT 2 has tasks related to monitoring this ceasefire. Of course we have our troops also in the Krajina region, CANBAT 1. We also have a group largely in the service area located in Split.

This three-part conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been stabilized to some degree. The international community has turned its attention to finding a solution to the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs.

As we know, to inject more life into this the contact group was established with Great Britain, France, the European Union, the United States and the Russian federation in April 1994. This group has worked particularly diligently in trying to get a solution.

Its first proposition was to redraw the map in a post-conflict Bosnia whereby the Bosnian Muslims and Croats would receive about 51 per cent of the territory and the Bosnian Serbs about 49 per cent. The parties were also offered a number of incentives and disincentives to encourage their acceptance of the new plan.

Like previous international offers, the plan was rejected in a Bosnian-Serb referendum by more than 90 per cent of the voters. Despite these setbacks, the contact group and the warring parties have continued.

There was another development recently, before the year end. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter met with officials in both Sarajevo and Pale and succeeded in negotiating an agreement for a countrywide ceasefire in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the opening of negotiations for an end to hostilities by January 1, 1995.

On December 31, 1994 the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serbs signed a cessation of hostilities agreement to take effect along the lines of confrontation for a four month period ending in April 1995.

This agreement is being supervised and monitored by UNPROFOR, including our troops. The agreement calls for a separation of the forces, full freedom of movement, the opening of the Sarajevo airport, restoration of utilities, exchanges of prisoners of war and the withdrawal of all foreign troops.