

*Government Orders*

NATO and to show solidarity. It is nothing more and nothing less.

What of the soldiers? Before I could advocate sending Canadian troops back to Bosnia I would want more assurances that we have done our job to ensure their safety. Yes, they are soldiers and they would willingly lay down their lives in defence of Canada, but they should not be asked to do it for a political whim.

I have a few questions which the Prime Minister and his defence staff have not answered.

Is there a well defined Canadian mandate? NATO wants to stabilize the situation within 12 months and then pull out. However, the Prime Minister said that we should be prepared to stay there longer. That is unacceptable. If we are going in, it should be for a set period, after which we can assess the situation with a full debate. All the facts should be revealed to the Canadian public, for the army belongs to them, not to the current political party. It is their sons and daughters we are talking about. If we do not have a time frame for withdrawal, how do we know if we have achieved our objectives? Canada must establish its own criteria for participation, not just use NATO's.

Will the Prime Minister make a commitment to hold a comprehensive military and political review after 10 months so our troops will know what to expect by the end of the year? Uncertainty will only exacerbate morale problems. Over the past three years the government has unilaterally extended our commitment without listening to Parliament or consulting the Canadian people. Let us not do it again.

Can the Prime Minister assure us that our soldiers will be better equipped than the last time they went to Bosnia? They are the best trained troops in the world, but there is a limit to improvisation. If we are going to send them back into a potential war zone they deserve the best equipment we can afford. With cuts at DND and outdated personnel carriers, is this realistic?

Can the Prime Minister assure us that Canadian soldiers will be under Canadian command? No one seems to know the answer to that question. We cannot afford another Gallipoli or Dieppe. It should be a precondition for our participation.

Canadian peacekeepers are trained to clear up misunderstandings before they escalate into open conflict. I have grave concerns that the same cannot be said for everyone else in the 60,000 strong occupation force. If civilians are antagonized by inexperienced peacekeepers, will this increase the risk to our Canadian soldiers?

The parliamentary secretary asked for some recommendations. I have one for him. He noted that assistance to refugees and humanitarian assistance is a secondary priority. I believe it should be Canada's top priority. I believe we should focus our

involvement on technical, logistical and human support. Yes, we have commitments to our NATO allies, but we have an even greater moral obligation to our troops.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River for beginning his remarks by stating that we have to achieve a proper balance between the need for the security of our troops and what we are trying to achieve. I regret that he then promptly descended into political rhetoric which suggested that all of this was being done for the sake of political vanity and the whims of politicians. Does the member not agree this is a changed situation? Will he not admit this is an extraordinary opportunity?

• (2015)

Three months ago in that theatre we looked at the possibility of that war extending itself outside those borders, of hundreds of thousands of displaced people, thousands of men, women and children losing their lives, with a terrible winter coming on with no prospect of success. Suddenly we have a prospect of peace, which requires to make it work the contribution of the world community to get in there, pull the parties apart and make it work. Surely that is worth some risk. Surely that is worth our participating in. Why is that a whim? Why is that some irresponsible craziness on behalf of people to want to see that?

Is Mr. Clinton being whimsical and foolish to commit 20,000 United States troops to this enterprise? Are the British and the French a bunch of whimsical idiots to be doing this? Why are we suddenly portrayed as people who have just vanity instead of people who are recognizing we have a global responsibility to peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, which we have been doing in this country for generations now? This is an opportunity to make an important contribution. To be pulling up all these objections at this time and to be accusing people of engaging troops because of some form of whimsical vanity strikes me as not only irresponsible, it is absolute foolishness. It is wind and wind and wind.

**Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River):** Madam Speaker, I will leave it up to the audience watching at home tonight on their televisions to decide who is full of wind and wind and wind after that outburst by the hon. member.

I would say that it is whimsical on the part of our government. Certainly Mr. Clinton is not. He is sending his troops over there with the best equipment in the world. What are we sending our troops with?

We have been raising these concerns on this side of the House for two years. The Reform Party has raised these issues time and time again about inadequately equipping our troops. We ask the same questions today. The hon. member was just asked that question and he evaded the answer again. We are asking because