

Government Orders

First, there is agreement by parties to a peaceful settlement. Coming from a constituency that happens to include the majority of the Canadian Rockies, I come from a very beautiful but remote area. We have all sorts of very large wildlife there and it makes me think of walking down a path with a 22 calibre rifle and coming across a grizzly bear in rutting season. I would really have to think twice about what I was going to do simply because I would be wondering what the bear was going to.

Truly if we as a nation are going to become involved in these situations where we have 500, 1,000 or 1,500 people and we are up against an array of tens of thousands of combatants, is it not somewhat like walking down a trail and coming across a grizzly bear when I only have a 22 calibre rifle in my hand?

Second, we must also know what clear mandate we have to be there.

Third, we must have a sound financial and logical basis for being there.

Narrowing the focus for just a second to specifically the situation in Bosnia, I must profess that I do not necessarily understand, and perhaps many Canadians do not understand, if we do in fact have a sound financial and logistical basis for being there.

If I may I would like to share a brief story about what happened on my first day in Parliament. The member for Fraser Valley East and I were on a tour with our wives and the four of us ended up in the Remembrance Chapel at the base of the Peace Tower. I recommend it to all members. It was a riveting experience. We were there at 11 o'clock. If one has the good fortune of being there at 11 o'clock one will be there when they turn the pages of the books of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the war. It was a very moving experience because it gave me a real feeling of what it is to be a Canadian and what price has been paid so that we have the freedom of speech we have here tonight in this House of Commons.

I thank those dead people, but what about the ones who are living? What about the ones who are currently facing danger and threat every single second that they are in these theatres of war? I personally cannot possibly imagine the fear that must grip an individual in those situations. They come back but they have emotional scars. This is a price they and their families pay when they come back. When these brave men and women of our Canadian forces come back their families have to deal with their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters or children who have been there and have been changed because of the experience. There is a tremendous price. There is a real cost to being involved in a war as we are.

• (2115)

Reflecting again on my experience in the Remembrance Chapel I wondered to myself how many of these brave men and women died as a result of quick decisions, forced decisions. As we are going forward and want to broaden the approach by taking a look at the future direction of peacekeeping in Canada I ask: Can we take the time? Can we take deliberate action? Can we set the goals for measurement? Can we plan? Can we gain an original purpose for why we are there?

My own feeling is that we must continue in peacekeeping. Our world needs our interventions in peacekeeping. In his intervention the member for Red Deer, my colleague in the Reform Party, suggested using some of the bases and some of our expertise to export peacekeeping understanding and peacekeeping lessons. It was an excellent suggestion but we must measure the cost.

The Reform Party probably for the last three or four days in the House has spoken only in terms of cost. Whenever we talk about that we talk about dollars and cents. I would like to reflect for a second on the emotional cost, the cost of those who will pay the ultimate sacrifice.

With respect to Bosnia in the short term I would agree with the other members who suggest that if we do something precipitous, if we do something quickly, we will create danger for the people in that theatre of war. Furthermore if we telegraph what we are going to be doing, in other words if we are too obvious with where we are coming from, we create self-fulfilling prophesy. Truly we are caught in a bind.

I believe we must not do something precipitous. We must be prepared to cut our loss but to do it intelligently and with planning. We must resist at all cost instant solutions. Far too often in our community we see instant solutions, the desire for instant solutions. We must take deliberate action.

As a very proud Canadian I sometimes feel that as a nation we end up with boy scout or altruistic actions, taking a reaction to world events. Rather than being pulled along by the world community into these peacekeeping situations I believe we must become more businesslike in our decision making so that we may manage our future direction.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): I wish to thank the member who spoke before me; his presentation was very clear and to the point. But I would like to add a comment. Last November 27, in my riding, I met thirty young soldiers returning from Bosnia who were celebrating with the families of thirty other soldiers who had just left for Bosnia.

While talking with them, I realized something that several of my colleagues mentioned today. It seemed like they were not