

*Special Debate*

Members of the Reform Party have made very clear their position on the issue. We should announce and make very clear that Canada intends to withdraw from the former Yugoslavia. We should give the UN a three-month notice of that decision. The reason we are taking this position is that we know it would be very difficult for us to pull out immediately and leave a vacuum until another nation is able to step in and take over where we left off.

I feel, therefore, that we should be debating whether Canada should commit continued peacekeepers to the former Yugoslavia in the long run. If we do not debate the issue now, when will the issue be debated?

Recognizing the fact that the debate should have occurred weeks ago, I state unequivocally that we should pull out and give the UN three months notice. Many people on the other side of the House may be asking why we should pull out of the former Yugoslavia. There are numbers of reasons why we should leave.

Despite our past history as peacekeepers to all the world's troubled regions, I feel strongly that in this new world order of regional, ethnic and tribal conflict running rampant and with Canada's own defence resources shrinking at an alarming rate the government must develop a commitment criterion to give us a guide for future deployments of our peacekeeping troops.

On December 1, 1994 the Reform caucus issued a statement which outlined the four conditions that should be met to keep Canadian peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia. We developed these criteria because of the numerous violations and because Canadian troops were being held hostage.

At that time we said, first, that all UN detainees should be released immediately; second, that the warring factions should agree to cease all aggressive actions toward the UNPROFOR troops; third, that the Sarajevo airport should be immediately reopened and all humanitarian aid should be allowed to proceed without interference by any of the warring factions; and, fourth, that a ceasefire should be put in place and honoured by all sides.

Let us look at each one of the points individually. Even though all UN detainees have been released there is still no guarantee that the warring factions would not undertake such activity again. As a matter of fact with the situation in Bosnia we are in close contact with Serbian troops on a daily basis. It is a very volatile situation. It is something that could possibly happen.

There have been less aggressive acts toward UNPROFOR over the past couple of months but incidents do occur. There is no guarantee in place by the warring factions to prevent any future aggressive acts. All humanitarian aid is not getting through. Anyone who says it is, is simply not stating the truth.

Two weeks ago the Montreal *Gazette* reported that there was a desperate food shortage in the Bihac pocket because of the heavy fighting between government troops and the alliance of Bosnia Serbs, Croatian Serbs and the renegade Bosnian Muslims. I would like to quote from the Associated Press report:

The Serbs generally refuse to give the United Nations permission to move convoys into the region through Serb-held territory. The United Nations does not have a mandate to use force to get its humanitarian aid through.

The UN World Food Program, based in Rome, said only 5,000 people in the enclave get regular meals from public kitchens. Patients in hospitals eat only one meal a day.

Only an estimated 20 per cent of the people trapped in the region have received any donated food during the past six months, the agency said.

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The reason for the failure of the first three criteria is due to the failure of the fourth criterion which the Reform Party laid down. There is no ceasefire in place in Bosnia that is being honoured by all sides. Do the warring factions even actually want peace? Are they willing to make a lasting truce upon which a negotiated peaceful settlement will be found?

In the case of Bosnia it appears the answer is a resounding no. The combatants do not want peace. Short-lived truces are only holding long enough for the combatants to reform and refit. As we can see, the latest truce between the Bosnian government and the rebel Serbs is crumbling. It is crumbling as we debate this issue tonight. As UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko said yesterday: "It is our understanding both parties continue to opt for a military option".

We must consider the facts. Without a meaningful negotiation between the combatants, peace is only wishful thinking. The role of a peacekeeper is to keep the combatants apart while they negotiate peace. There is no peace and there is no negotiation. Canadian troops are more like pawns in a game of chess between the differing parties. The threat of interference by both Serbs and Bosnians has not been reduced.

It is dangerous to train and equip our troops for traditional peacekeeping missions when we are putting them into a situation which cannot succeed, where there is no peace or a will for peace between the parties.

Many in the House will defend our humanitarian role on grounds that the civilians would be worse off without the peacekeepers. I can sympathize with that because I travelled there. We should be very proud of our troops. They have done a good job.

In the short term it may be true that the presence of UN peacekeepers in Bosnia may have prevented widespread starvation. However, at the same time the UN presence may have actually perpetuated division, squalor and low-level fighting for longer than would otherwise have been the case. We must