

*Private Members' Business*

government must have the flexibility and some measure of independence to make these decisions.

In effect while Bill C-295 would like to see Canada define its own objectives for specific peacekeeping missions and decide when those objectives are met, it is willing to place Canadian commanding officers under UN or other international command. This is unacceptable. Currently Canadian forces personnel serving on peacekeeping operations are always commanded by a Canadian. While they can be placed under operational control of multinational commanders for specific tasks they are never put under command of the UN or other international organizations. If they were, their assigned tasks would be changed. Their units could be split up and they could be deployed to new areas of operations, all without consent of the Canadian government. This would be unacceptable.

At present all Canadian contingent commanders are directly responsible to the chief of the defence staff for the Canadian contribution to the overall mission and tasks of a peacekeeping force. Bill C-295 would end this practice which would ultimately mean less, not more national control. This does not seem to fit the general intent of the bill which suggests many of these concepts have not been fairly thought out.

Such muddled thinking carries over to the sections of the bill dealing with rules of engagement and the use of force. Subsection 5(3) authorizes the use of deadly force only in self-defence and in defence of civilians threatened with deadly force or else to stop serious human rights abuses.

However, it is important to understand peacekeepers may use force to protect civilians only if it is specifically authorized by a United Nations security council resolution. At the same time, the UN mandate may also require the use of force for reasons other than those specified in subsection 5(3).

In other words, rules of engagement must take into account the specifics of the mandate. They cannot be restricted by legislation that turns a blind eye to such details.

• (1740)

The bill is murky and confusing in other areas. It would amend the National Defence Act so that all members of the Canadian forces assigned to a peacekeeping mission would be on active service for all purposes. However, this proposal is unnecessary because pursuant to Order in Council 1989-583, April 6, 1989, all regular force members anywhere in or beyond Canada and all reserve force members beyond Canada are currently on active service.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A couple of the government speakers have pointed out to me an error I made in the drafting of the bill. At line 31 of page 3, I used the words "command of the United

Nations" when I meant to use "operational control". I wonder if there would be unanimous consent for the following. I move:

That, in line 31 of subclause 6(2) of Bill C-295, the Peacekeeping Act, the word "command" be struck out and replaced by "operational control".

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to permit that change in the bill?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to participate in the debate on Bill C-295, an act to provide for the control of Canadian peacekeeping activities by Parliament and to amend the National Defence Act in consequence thereof.

I would remind you that the Bloc Québécois has already expressed its support, with a few reservations, for this bill by our colleague for Fraser Valley East.

I would like to recall the exceptional participation by Canadians, and particularly francophones, in UN peacekeeping operations since they started in 1956 at the initiative of Lester B. Pearson.

I would also take the opportunity afforded me to salute the courage of the Canadian military who, over the years and in the course of various missions, have taken part in UN peacekeeping operations. I salute in particular the members of the Royal 22nd Regiment from Valcartier. Their presence in the former Yugoslavia reminds me that the horrors of this Bosnian conflict are felt right here at home. I want to offer all my moral support to the men and women who are over there and to their families here, who are feeling doubt and uncertainty but also pride.

These peacekeeping missions are not what they were 40 years ago. They are constantly changing. They are increasingly costly in human and material terms, and their objectives are ever more in doubt. The role of peacekeepers is also being questioned. Should the deployment of international troops be faster and easier or, on the contrary, should UN peacekeeping operations be limited? Should UN peacekeepers have broader mandates?

Recent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda have made the international public more aware of peacekeeping activities, but they mainly brought to light the flawed rules of engagement for UN peacekeepers, and perhaps also the Canadian government's lack of responsibility in refusing to set clear peacekeeping objectives.

Yet, these operations were once quite simple. The peacekeepers' job was to come between the warring factions in order to keep the peace and foster the resolution of conflicts. But peacekeeping operations have changed a great deal since the