

Oral Questions

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has said, we are first of all very proud of our peacekeepers and we do everything we can as a government to ensure their safety and that the rules of engagement are clear. Those rules of engagement are established by the United Nations. We work very closely with them and through our military in assessing the capacity of our people to carry out their mission.

• (1435)

This does not mean that it should not be re-examined virtually on a constant basis and that is something that we do. It is something we are in constant touch with the United Nations about.

The situation that we find ourselves in as do others in Yugoslavia is different from the kind of situation we have found ourselves in before. We have worked closely with our own military and have had long discussions with them as to the capacity of our military to carry on their job.

Yes, we know that they can do that under extraordinary difficulties, but we are peacekeepers who have faced difficult missions before. This is not the first even though it is different from some others.

We are there because of the people of Yugoslavia who require our help and that of the international community. We will continue to do all we can for them as well as for our own people through the United Nations and through our own examination of our capacities.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to put my question to the minister.

The peace process in the former Yugoslavia is stalled in New York. There is continued violence and rape against civilians in Bosnia. Our troops are operating under a mandate that does not allow them to do the role they are sent to do. The Canadian member of the UN commission on war crimes said there are no resources to carry out that mission.

Is the minister not concerned about these problems? Is the minister not concerned that the entire UN mission in Bosnia is losing its credibility? Is it not the responsibility of Canada to make some new proposals, to take some new initiatives to try to restore the legitimacy and

effectiveness of that action in that poor war-stricken country?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada has been in the forefront of taking initiatives around the tragedy in the former Yugoslavia.

We helped the Secretary-General when he was redesigning and re-examining the whole concept of peacekeeping through his agenda for peace. The concept of bringing war criminals to trial as individual criminals internationally was a Canadian initiative at the London Conference on Yugoslavia.

We have provided resources. I have said publicly that I will support that initiative among other countries and advocate that other countries do the same.

Yes, the peace process at the moment is facing difficulties, but if ultimately there is going to be peace in Yugoslavia, there is going to have to be a negotiated settlement. The Security Council is, right now even as we are here, attempting to bring some conclusion to this. We are supporting it every step of the way and helping it in every way that we can and we will continue to do that.

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STUDENT LOANS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Nowlan: He was in his seat, Mr. Speaker. You were in your seat, Howard. Otherwise it is a farce. Mr. Speaker, this is important. You have to get out of your seat before you are recognized. Otherwise you should be off the list.

Mr. McCurdy: I do not know if I need a bodyguard or not to pursue this question.

Yesterday in response to a question the Secretary of State indicated that there had been wide consultation before the government introduced its new single bank monopoly Canada Student Loans Program.

We called the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and none of them had been consulted.