



STATEMENT

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS

BY THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉ OUELLET,

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

AT THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON PEACEKEEPING

OTTAWA, Ontario
January 25, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker:

During his visit to Europe, the Prime Minister was asked whether the Government would be maintaining Canadian troops in the former Yugoslavia in the spring. The Prime Minister replied that no decision would be made until the matter could be debated in this House.

The importance of this matter dictates that it be the subject of a serious consultation among the elected representatives of the people. Our decision, whatever it may be, will have a heavy impact on our future role in peacekeeping, our foreign policy and our defence policy. We must also bear in mind that the position we take will affect our relations with friendly countries.

The Government's position on the broad question of the place of peacekeeping in Canada's foreign and defence policies is well-known. We are on record as stating we intend to "strengthen Canada's leadership role in international peacekeeping." In the upcoming foreign and defence policy reviews we will be examining a variety of ways in which this can be done, many of which were elaborated in the "Red Book." While all members of this House are, I am sure, familiar with the Red Book, an illustrative list of these ideas would include a re-examination of the notion of stand-by forces for peacekeeping, a look at the training of peacekeepers, and a look at our procurement policies.

Any debate on peacekeeping must begin by placing the issue in the context of Canada's historical contribution in this area and of the tremendous upheavals that are affecting the nature of peacekeeping operations.

Ever since the initiative taken in 1956 by former Prime Minister and then-External Affairs Minister Lester B. Pearson, Canada has been closely associated in the minds of Canadians and of other countries with leadership and expertise in peacekeeping. For years we have participated in the overwhelming majority of the peacekeeping operations mandated by the United Nations Security Council. We continue today to contribute to most of the missions, including the more difficult ones. As you know, the Government has clearly stated its conviction that peacekeeping is a very important component of Canada's contribution to the multilateral system and to the preservation of peace in the world.

Canadians have always believed in the value of promoting multilateral mechanisms for security and crisis management. Peacekeeping is one of the most important of these mechanisms. Our approach to peacekeeping is rooted in a wider view, which seeks to promote the prevention of conflicts before they begin, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts already under way.

Over the years, Canada has developed guidelines governing its participation in peacekeeping operations. Let me summarize them:

there must be a clear, achievable mandate from a competent political authority like the Security Council; the parties to the conflict must undertake to respect a cease-fire and must accept the presence of the Canadian troops; the peacekeeping operation must undergird a process aimed at achieving a political settlement; the number of troops and the international composition of the operation must be suited to the mandate; the operation must be adequately funded and have a satisfactory logistical structure. In the past, the amount of risk incurred by our soldiers was rarely a problem. This is no longer the case; the risk factor has become an essential element in our decision-making.

Although these guidelines are still valid, the international setting in which peacekeeping operations occur has changed radically since 1989 and will, in my opinion, continue to change. I welcome the views of the House in this regard. In reviewing the course of history to date, it seems clear that peacekeeping operations have traditionally been launched when the parties to a conflict concluded that their purposes would no longer be served by the continuation of an armed conflict, but by a settlement negotiated with the aid of a third party. These operations were consequently deployed with the permission of the protagonists to monitor a cease-fire or the withdrawal of troops from disputed zones.

Then, in 1989-90, far more extensive operations were introduced, designed to assist the parties involved to put into effect a negotiated settlement to a conflict. In Cambodia, for example, the United Nations had the mandate of disarming the factions and establishing security throughout the country, repatriating refugees, ensuring respect for human rights, supervising the key ministries of the national government and organizing provisional elections. Thus, a very important civilian component was added to the traditional military presence.

A new concept, that of humanitarian intervention, was introduced in Bosnia and Somalia. Our soldiers were sent not to maintain a cease-fire or a peace that obviously did not exist; their mandate was to help get humanitarian convoys through. The example of Somalia shows that this type of intervention can have some very positive results. Despite the problems we hear about -- most of them centred on Mogadishu -- the humanitarian crisis has largely been surmounted in the rest of the country.

The United Nations Secretary-General has acknowledged this process of evolution in his *An Agenda for Peace*, which is based on the principle that conflict management requires a whole range of tools, one of which is peacekeeping. The international community's objectives have become more ambitious and include conflict prevention, consolidation or restoration of peace by

diplomatic means such as mediation or good offices, peacekeeping, and the political and social reconstruction of ruined societies.

Some operations contain a mixture of these elements. The term *peacekeeping* has taken on a rather elastic meaning, often extending beyond the concept of forces of interposition, as seen in Cyprus, for example.

It is important to note the international context that has made this process of development possible. The end of the confrontation between the two superpowers has opened the way -- at least so far -- for an unprecedented degree of consensus on the Security Council, which in the past few years has been able to exercise a measure of the authority that is recognized in the United Nations Charter, but which has existed only on paper until now.

It must be recognized, Mr. Speaker, that this process flies in the face of our preconceived notions about the nature of peacekeeping and how the international community should respond. Without wishing to launch into a terminological discourse, let me point out that the new concepts used by the Secretary-General in *An Agenda for Peace* each have a specific meaning. The term *peacemaking* refers to essentially diplomatic activities pursued to resolve a conflict, while *peace enforcement* is a situation where the international community uses force against a member state, as in the Gulf War. What complicates things is that an element of force is increasingly being introduced in the Security Council resolutions mandating peacekeeping operations. This is the case with Somalia and with Bosnia.

The effects of these changes on the United Nations are obvious: the UN finds itself in a position where it must manage operations involving more than 68 000 soldiers worldwide. This increase has had a profound impact upon the cost of peacekeeping. Canada's assessed peacekeeping contributions, for example, have remained at a steady 3.11 percent of the total UN peacekeeping budget in the past five years. In absolute terms, however, Canada's contribution has risen from \$10-12 million in 1991-92 to some \$130 million in 1993-94, even as we maintained our steady 3.11 percent level of assessment. Clearly, the UN does not presently have the human, financial or technical resources for the task.

To make up this shortfall, the UN is relying more and more on help from regional organizations such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe [CSCE], the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], the Organization of American States, and the Organization for African Unity. This co-operation between the UN and regional organizations was foreseen in the Charter of the UN, but the extent of it is new in practice. The

views of the House on the implications of this trend would be welcome.

The sharp rise in the number of peacekeeping missions has brought many challenges with it. These include: political challenges, as the international community is increasingly taking on responsibility for situations that just a short time ago were confined to the internal affairs of the states involved; military challenges, as we see a rapidly growing demand for soldiers with the training and equipment for missions as dangerous as they are complex; and, of course, financial challenges created by personnel numbering in the tens of thousands, rather than the few thousands of yesteryear's operations.

In order to face the new challenges, the United Nations and its member states will have to thoroughly re-examine the way in which peacekeeping operations are being managed. At the national level, we must look at our commitments with an increasingly critical eye. Internationally, an urgent need exists to reinforce the United Nations' capability to respond professionally and quickly to the crises requiring its attention. Canada responds generously to calls from the United Nations and from regional organizations for needed experts. General Baril, the Secretary-General's military advisor, is a Canadian, and many other Canadians have been made available to the United Nations and the CSCE. We pay our financial contributions in full and in time, and have given the Secretary-General recommendations on how to make the United Nations structure more effective. We are determined to increase our effort, and to exercise the leadership that the other countries expect from us in this field.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian men and women serving under the United Nations banner are saving lives and relieving misery. None of us will forget the poignant images of the soldiers who aided the helpless victims in a hospital in Bosnia.

It is also clear that their living conditions are increasingly dangerous. Here another picture comes to mind, that of the 11 Canadian soldiers threatened by Serbian troops near Sarajevo last month.

Events in Bosnia are thus very much in the public eye. The powerful images of the suffering of the Bosnian people and the challenges facing our troops have become an integral part of the evening news. However, we must look beyond these images to the larger questions that Bosnia poses. These questions fall into two categories: the future of our commitment to the UN effort in Bosnia itself, and the implications of this episode for our peacekeeping policy generally.

These are the questions with which the Government is now wrestling. The views of this House, and of the public generally are of critical importance in our deliberations.

In discussing events in Bosnia, we must bear in mind certain factors that have guided our action to date. To begin with, we must recognize that there are two relatively distinct operations taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Though both are taking place under the banner of one UN operation, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), they are quite different in terms of the activities under way and the dangers they face.

In Croatia, our peacekeepers are engaged in a relatively traditional UN operation. There are two distinct sides, and they have agreed to respect a stable cease-fire line while negotiating a permanent settlement to their differences. While these negotiations are in progress, the two sides have asked the UN to provide an international force to monitor the cease-fire and patrol the line. The situation is relatively stable, though that stability is highly dependent upon events in Bosnia, and the risks to our troops are low. This is peacekeeping as we understand it, and have practised it for several decades.

In Bosnia, however, the situation is radically different. There is no cease-fire, and there is certainly no line. Even the desire to negotiate seems to be lacking. In these circumstances, the UN Security Council has mandated our forces to engage in assisting in the provision of humanitarian relief to the civilians caught in the middle of the conflict, and in providing protection through a small military presence in Srebrenica, a UN designated "safe area." Our actions in Srebrenica, Mr. Speaker, are a perfect example of the evolution of peacekeeping to which I referred earlier. It remains an environment in which the peacekeepers require the permission of the parties to the conflict to go about their duties. At the same time, however, there are some elements of enforcement in our mandate in Srebrenica, though they are not well-defined.

The task in Bosnia is an infinitely more difficult and dangerous one than that which our peacekeepers have traditionally faced. In addition to the dangers of simply operating in a war zone, we must face the fact that some of the factions do not always want the humanitarian aid to get through.

For all of these dangers, however, it has been argued that the UN force is making a critical contribution. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Red Cross have confirmed that aid is getting through. People who would otherwise be dead are alive today. Canadian troops have played a vital role in this effort and continue to do so.

Beyond this humanitarian effort, it is often pointed out that Canada's presence in Bosnia has served to demonstrate our continuing commitment to act with our NATO allies in the promotion of European security. It also demonstrates to the world that Canada is a nation that is prepared to carry out its international obligations under difficult circumstances, while others are merely willing to offer advice from the sidelines.

At the same time, serious questions must be asked as we debate our continued participation in UNPROFOR. Is there a reasonable prospect of any progress in the peace process in the foreseeable future? Will sufficient humanitarian aid continue to get through? At what point will the danger to our troops outweigh the benefits of our presence there?

At the recent NATO Summit the question of the dangers faced by our troops was the subject of much debate. In particular, the topic of air strikes as a means of relieving the pressures on our troops was prominent in media reports of the Summit. Because some confusion seems to exist in the public mind, I would like to take advantage of this timely opportunity to clarify the Government's position on the subject of air strikes, and our understanding of the procedures in place for their authorization.

Essentially there are two distinct scenarios for air strikes. The first envisages the case where UN troops are directly under attack. In this specific case, NATO agreed in June that the Commander of UNPROFOR could call on the UN Secretary-General to authorize an air strike to assist UN troops where they are under attack. The fact that the UN Secretary-General would be the ultimate authority for an air strike under these conditions was insisted upon by Canada, in view of the highly charged political considerations that would surround such a decision. There would be no debate within NATO before the strike was carried out, as time would be of the essence.

The second type of air strike would be intended to remove an obstacle to UNPROFOR's performance of its duties in circumstances where there is no direct threat to UNPROFOR troops. The proposed air strike would thus be less time-urgent. Under these circumstances, the Commander of UNPROFOR would submit a request for such an air strike to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who must give his authorization. The request would also be discussed in the North Atlantic Council of NATO. The North Atlantic Council must agree to support the request.

Mr. Speaker, the North Atlantic Council operates by means of consensus. Therefore, no decision to launch an air strike under these circumstances could be made unless all of the allies agreed to it. Canada's position on this question is well-known and would guide our representative to the North Atlantic Council in such debate.

With respect to the second broad issue before us, the implications of Bosnia for our peacekeeping policy generally, it would seem that events in Bosnia provide a clear example of what I have been saying about the way in which peacekeeping is developing. We must recognize that decisions we make regarding the continuation of our commitment to the UN operation in Bosnia must be taken in the context of our consideration of Canada's willingness to remain involved in the broadening range of peacekeeping activities.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks have been intended to raise several questions -- questions about the future of peacekeeping generally and questions about the related subject of our future in Bosnia. In the immediate term, the Government must make a decision about the future of our commitment in Bosnia and we want to hear to the views of this House on that subject. As for the longer term issue of Canada's peacekeeping policy generally, we intend to consult with individual Canadians as part of the ongoing reviews of our foreign and defence policies.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table this motion, seconded by my colleague the Minister of National Defence, calling for a debate on peacekeeping. In particular the Government seeks the views of this House in two general areas: Canada's future in peacekeeping, and our future commitment to Bosnia.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.