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the member says and I believe that he is correct that we are in danger if we extract our forces of allowing the fighting there to intensify.

However, if we stay involved we are also staying to observe constant carnage, killing, maiming and bombardment. I do not think there is any completely satisfactory solution to the dilemma. That is why I propose that perhaps firm action would make the difference.

With regard to the percentage, as I mentioned a few moments ago, the Muslims in Bosnia and Croatia comprise over 40 per cent of the population. It is my understanding that they are getting weapons both from the Serbs and the Croats and are in a position to at least defend themselves.

With regard to the second question on our troops in Croatia, there is sufficient interplay between the peoples in the region that demands should be made to everybody in the region and our threats should be to everyone in the region: "If you do not somehow influence a peaceful resolution of this situation we are going to withdraw our forces".

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to give my maiden speech. I never thought I would be doing it on such an important subject as this one which certainly affects us now and for a long time in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and all other members. I want to particularly thank the people of my constituency of central Alberta. Certainly I will claim to have the most beautiful constituency with the greatest people who we possibly could have.

I want to congratulate the Prime Minister and his ministers for making this day possible. This is an example of the sort of open Parliament that Canadians want. We have to go further with more free votes and constituent assemblies and as the hon. minister mentioned with tours around the country to find out what Canadians really think on such important matters.

Peacekeeping is a very difficult subject along with what we should do and the decision we should make today. In getting this information there are a number of points that we have to consider. Certainly we have to realize that past wars and the history of places like Bosnia make it an ignition point and one that certainly could explode into a much more serious situation as has been described.

• (1155)

I think we also have to recognize that there is really no will to settle this conflict and there will not be a will in many of the situations our peacekeepers get into. I think the escalation point

we should look at is of course the great power of the Muslim world and what it could put behind a conflict like this.

We should also look at Russia and its changing political scene, almost as we sit here. Certainly its defence of the Slavic races is a consideration. There is Greece and Macedonia. There is France and its position in the EC. There is Italy, Germany and Albania and their interests in this area as well. All of the recent history we must consider in making our decision on Bosnia.

Something we must also consider is the presence and importance of television in any decision we make. Around every corner is CNN, BBC and of course Newsworld. They show the atrocities and the terrible parts of all of these conflicts right on the screen in your home. We cannot underestimate the power of this sort of influence.

We must realize of course that we have no good guys or bad guys. We do not have anybody wearing a white hat or a black hat which is what we North Americans would like to see. There are atrocities occurring on all sides and we must be aware of that.

We must also be aware that the killing will not stop. It will not stop whether we stay or whether we leave. This is going on. We must recognize the humanitarian successes that have been taking place and we certainly must commend our forces for what they have been doing.

There are a lot of choices but what really should Canada do about peacekeeping? I have tried to put myself in the position of my constituents. I have tried to think about the people of the province of Alberta where we have a great many people in the military. I have tried to think of myself as a Canadian as to what I should really say.

Initially I thought we should just pull the troops out and let the Serbs and Bosnians fight it out themselves. It is a civil war and we should not be part of it. I must admit, however, upon getting into further detail that there is a lot more to it than just that. There is the humanitarian aspect of it, the war crimes and the innocent civilians. Every time we turn on the television we hear about these things. We have to think about that in any decision that we make.

We of course must realize the risk that we are putting our troops under. As things escalate, as there are threats of an increased escalation this spring, how many troops are we prepared as Canadians to bring home in body bags? We have to ask that question and we have to take this as a very serious part of our decision.

We have to look at ourselves as leaders in the area of peacekeeping. Certainly a pull out would be an abrogation of some of those responsibilities. We have to ask what that does to us as Canadians and how we feel because of that. The cost of

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course has been mentioned and our debt and deficit are part of any decision when we come to spending money.

The decision then is not easy. We have all these factors to consider. I tried to see if there was anything positive to this whole situation. Can peacekeeping have a positive part to it?

The conclusion I came to was a feeling of nationalism that is part of peacekeeping. What makes Canadians feel good? Next month we are going to look at our athletes at the Olympics and we are going to feel good. When we hear that national anthem play we are going to feel good because they have just done something that made them stand out in the world.

We are going to make Canadians feel good today because this is good government. This is an opportunity for all sides, it does not matter what one's politics are, to really have a say. Thus we will feel good.

What about peacekeeping and making us feel good? We certainly have a reputation. All across the world we know that Canadians are the best trained, have the best political background and the best psychology, if you want, of taking care of peace in this world. We already have that and that is something we should build on and should be part of our national pride.

• (1200)

We of course should emphasize a leadership role. We do not have to take a second seat to anybody when it comes to peacekeeping and the settling of world disputes.

In terms of training, we should build on this. We should provide training for sale. What better thing could we do with the bases we are thinking of closing down than turn them into international academies for the training of peacekeepers?

Let us go further than just peacekeeping. Let us talk about the settling of all kinds of disputes. Let us talk about supervising elections and a better understanding of the cultural elements that are behind peacekeeping efforts. Let us provide conflict management, human rights monitoring, civil administration and emergency measures. One cannot help but think that that could be useful internally as well if we had something like an earthquake such as that which we have just witnessed in Los Angeles.

In conclusion, I think we should always maintain our role in peacekeeping and build on it. We should become world leaders. That is really where it is at. The building of that nationalism within us, that pride of being Canadian, I believe will even go so far as to make Quebecers feel that they want to stay a part of Canada.

We can do so much with this whole peacekeeping situation. If we in this 35th Parliament succeed in building this national pride then I think we have gone a long way in succeeding in why many of us are here.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, in congratulating the hon. member for Red Deer for his candid analysis I would like to ask him if it would be fair to conclude that he favours Canadian troops remaining in Bosnia? If that is so, does his view represent the position of his party or is the position of his party the one articulated earlier by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands?

**Mr. Mills (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I think the wonderful part of this day is that we can express our points of view taking into consideration all of our constituents and all of our fellow MPs.

I would say that withdrawal is something that is done when the safety of our forces cannot be guaranteed. That position is one that would be decided by the people in the field. I think the counterbalances, the humanitarian efforts that we are providing, offset whether we should leave or not.

Initially, I said that we had to get out. It is a civil war and we should be out of there the sooner the better. However, for the reasons I have given I would now say I have modified that position to say that it is only a last ditch thing to pull out. I think it is good that within our caucus we have this range. Through the rest of the day we will hear that range being developed. The main thing this leads to is that we must develop an overall policy for Canada both short term and of course very long term. The minister alluded to that earlier. I believe that is really what we are trying to accomplish today.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Red Deer for his comments.

I would like to ask the member for his views with respect to the concern that has been raised about the tremendous gap between a series of resolutions by the United Nations on the one hand and the reality on the ground on the other, particularly in Bosnia. We heard about children in Mostar who were recently slaughtered in the snow. We heard about children in Sarajevo just a few days similarly out sledding and playing. These six children were brutally murdered. It does not take a great deal of courage to lob artillery from 30 kilometres away.

I want to ask the member for Red Deer what his position is with respect to the plea by a number of respected United Nations commanding officers. God knows there have been a whole series of them that have made those pleas, most recently General Francis Briquemont who replaced General Morillon in Bosnia. He said: "There's a fantastic gap between the resolutions of the Security Council, the will to execute those resolutions and the means available to commanders".

• (1205)

When we have a situation in which the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic has said, and this was just last week: "Sarajevans will not be counting the dead. They will be counting the living".

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Does the member for Red Deer have any position with respect to the suggestion that has been made that we strengthen the mandate of the United Nations? Certainly a plea that I heard from a number of the soldiers on the ground in Croatia is that we strengthen the mandate of the United Nations to ensure that they have the ability not only to protect the safe havens, which are far from safe now, but end the artillery bombing which is taking place as well.

**Mr. Mills (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with an awful of what has been said. Of course one of the matters that has made this problem so difficult is that the United Nations does not seem to have shouldered the leadership role the way they should have.

We went through probably seven or eight briefings in preparation for today. One of the things we heard over and over again, particularly from the military, was the great difficulty in not having someone really in charge. Other difficulties were having different troops, different training.

I suppose that is where my international academy for peacekeepers comes in. With the United Nations having input in that, it might help solve some of those problems and at least the troops would be trained the same. If we could get the leadership the same, it would make the United Nations stronger.

In defence of the United Nations, it has had great difficulty getting people to participate, getting other countries to provide troops and so on. It is a two-way street and we must solve that problem.

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to participate in the debate today on the motion on Canada's peacekeeping role.

[*Translation*]

First I would like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for his sensible speech—

[*English*]

—and the two members of the Reform Party to my right, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and the member for Red Deer for their most informed speeches.

The debate we will hear today and tomorrow, first on peacekeeping and then on cruise, is a debate that will allow individual members to express his or her own views. There is no whip on this side. We are on record as being supportive of peacekeeping. That is in our red book and I would be very surprised if any of the Liberal members would disagree with our continuation in peacekeeping.

However with respect to the specific mission that we are talking about today in the former republics of Yugoslavia or tomorrow, which is the deployment of further testing of cruise missiles under the Test and Evaluation Agreement members, on

both sides of the House, and certainly in our party, are free to express their views and the government will take those views into account.

It is only appropriate that I join with the other members opposite in beginning my remarks by paying tribute to the men and women of the Canadian forces who, as we speak are working to bring some peace to the world's trouble spots. I know that members share my admiration and appreciation for the very difficult job they are doing, whether they are in Srebrenica in the Balkans, in the Far East, on the African continent, or off the southwest coast of Haiti. On behalf of all Canadians, merci beaucoup, thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Today, Parliament has an opportunity to consider the activities of our peacekeepers, the various aspects of Canada's contribution to peacekeeping and the future direction of our commitment in this respect.

Canadians are justly proud of this country's exceptional contribution to UN peacekeeping efforts. For 47 years, Canada has made a generous and sustained contribution to peacekeeping missions. The total number of Canadians who have served as peacekeepers over the years is now over 100,000.

Canada's high level of participation is particularly impressive when we consider that our country has only one-half of 1 per cent of the world's population.

• (1210)

No other country has a peacekeeping record that compares with Canada's. No other country knows the military operations aspect of peacekeeping as well as we do, and no other country has our expertise. This may explain why Canada is the only country in the world to have erected a national monument to peacekeeping.

Some say that Canada invented the peacekeeping concept. Most observers agree it was the UN emergency force, designed by former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in 1956, which demonstrated the value and potential of an international UN force.

During the sixties and in fact until the eighties, Canada increased its efforts and enhanced its reputation in the peacekeeping area. We were one of the few countries that were accepted as a neutral force to separate two belligerent parties. The international community has repeatedly called on Canada to take part in missions of many kinds throughout the world.

[*English*]

It was back in 1949 that Canada's first peacekeepers were deployed. They went to Kashmir with what was soon to become known as the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan under the acronym UNMOGIP.