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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, April 12, 1999**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 12, 1999

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1105)

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** On Wednesday, April 7, 1999, I received written notice from the hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges that he was unable to move his motion during Private Members' Business today.

[*Translation*]

As it was not possible to change positions on the list of priorities, I ask the clerk to drop this motion to the bottom of the list.

[*English*]

Private members' hour will thus be cancelled and the House will now proceed to the consideration of Government Orders.

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### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

#### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1999

The House resumed from March 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-71, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in parliament on February 16, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure today that I rise to speak to Bill C-71, second reading of the Budget Implementation Act.

The recent budget failed to address many of the fundamental issues facing Canadians. The government says that the fundamentals are strong. Those fundamentals include an unemployment rate that is twice that of the U.S., personal disposal income that has dropped 7% in recent years during the same period that the U.S. has

enjoyed an 11% growth in personal disposable income, and a productivity growth rate that the OECD warns Canada that if we do not improve our productivity growth rate there will be a substantial decline in our standard of living in the next 20 years. Personal debt rates are at an unprecedented high in Canada. The rate of personal bankruptcies is at an unprecedented high and there is a negative savings rate. These are the fundamentals of the Canadian economy.

When the government says the fundamentals are strong Canadians should be suspicious of the government's confidence in its policies. It reminds me of what John Kenneth Galbraith, the expatriate Canadian economist, once said. He said that one should be suspicious of governments that claim the fundamentals are strong.

I will speak specifically to some of the issues addressed in Bill C-71 relative to the CHST, the Canada health and social transfer. The government will increase funding, much of which will go to health care, by \$11.5 billion over the next five years. This will mean that by the year 2005 we will have reached the same level of federal health care investment that we had in 1995. Although the government promotes that it is reinvesting in health care, the fact is that it will take until 2005 to reach the same level which health care investment by the federal government reached in 1995.

• (1110)

The federal government increased spending on health care and increased transfers to the provinces for that but has not provided a comprehensive and coherent long term strategy for health care despite the fact that health care costs in Canada will continue to grow by about \$3 billion per year due to changing demographics. Again this is an indication of a government that by most accounts has a budget surplus but continues to have a bit of a leadership deficit.

Many Canadians were appalled when the government spent \$3 million of Canadian taxpayers money promoting that it was reinvesting in health care. Many Canadians are wondering why they did not hear ads at the time when the government was taking up to \$19 billion out of health care since 1993.

The fact is there were no such ads and the government is engaging in a propaganda machine to try to gloss over the fact that the same government which slashed health care and decimated the Canadian health care system, is now putting a band-aid on the health care system and has yet to deal with the systemic issues of the Canadian health care system.

*Government Orders*

The Budget Implementation Act addresses the issue of the reinvestment in social transfers. Money is being paid into a trust fund. Some \$3.5 billion of this money is being paid into a trust fund. This is more part of the government's Mother Hubbard approach to fiscal policy. Instead of investing the money now into Canadian health care when Canadians need it, when the lines to receive health care have never been longer, the government is putting it into a trust fund from which the provinces will draw over the next three years.

The reason the government set up this trust fund was to skirt around the issues that the auditor general raised over the past several budgets relative to the government's taking money out of one year's budget to spend in the future.

While this may address in some circuitous way the auditor general's concerns, the auditor general is not the only Canadian who is concerned about the government's bookkeeping practices. Not only does the government's fiscal policies offend good bookkeeping practices. It also offends good economics. Canadians need economic stimulus now. Canadians need a better health care system now. This is when we need the money to be invested, not in two years or three years.

Last year the government had a vague whiff of a surplus. What did it do? It took \$2.5 billion from that surplus and spent it on a millennium scholarship fund. It put the money into a pot that will not be drawn from for about three years. Not one Canadian in the year following that budget benefited from that \$2.5 billion. Not one Canadian will benefit for another three years, until those funds start to go out into the Canadian public. Even at that point about 5% of students seeking higher education will be receiving any benefit from that.

While the government claims to be trying to behave fiscally responsibly, in fact due to its short term partisan goals and in particular the leadership goals of the current Minister of Finance, the government is actually betraying its trust to the Canadian people by taking money from Canadians today when they need it and not spending it until the future, not providing the type of wide broad based tax relief that Canadians need, for instance the type of investment Canadians need in health care.

The fact is the government continues to tinker with the Canadian economy. This was referred to over the weekend at the Canadian Tax Foundation conference, a non-partisan gathering of tax experts from across the country. At that conference Robin MacKnight, director of the Canadian Tax Foundation, said that in his view there had been too much tinkering of late and that the tinkering had introduced far too much complexity into the tax code.

Of course the government tinkers with everything. The government does not have any broad based long term strategy relative to any issue, whether we look at its policies or non-policies on the environment or at the government's strategies on the economy.

• (1115)

This is not the type of government that would have the courage and vision to introduce a free trade agreement. This is not the type of government that would recognize the importance of eliminating a manufacturers' sales tax that punished Canadian exporters, replacing it with a consumption tax. This is a government that ducks the hard issues. It continues to tinker around the margins of the real issues, as opposed to dealing with the important problems facing the Canadian economy or any of the wide range of issues.

Bill C-71 also addresses issues of human resource management. It suspends the use of binding arbitration for another two years, to the year 2001.

Recently we had an all night debate on the back to work legislation for PSAC. During that debate I was as disillusioned as most Canadians when I saw the government withhold information from members of the House until after the vote on closure. Government members as well as opposition members, including members of the Reform Party, were successfully manipulated by the government to support closure when a tentative agreement had been reached with PSAC. It did not tell members of the House about the agreement because it wanted to force back to work legislation, to rub the noses of PSAC employees and its members a little farther into the ground.

This is not good human resource management. At a time when the Government of Canada has the responsibility to play a leadership role in human resource management we are finding that the government again is not managing the issue appropriately. The morale in our public service has never been lower than it is now under this government and that is because of the government's continued disrespect for the public service and its continued efforts to emasculate the public service.

Binding arbitration has a role to play in labour management. It is time for the government to return to using binding arbitration prior to using back to work legislation. Binding arbitration is meant to be an ameliorative step to deal with problems before using the incredibly powerful tool of back to work legislation.

The government continues to try to circumvent legitimate labour management practices. It will not use binding arbitration. In fact it will be another two years before it even addresses binding arbitration.

This bill does not address effectively the issue of single income families that are punished by the government and face a discriminatory tax policy.

The Canadian Tax Foundation had its annual meeting this weekend. Bob Brown, who is currently on contract with the Department of Finance, is a leading tax expert and a member of

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that foundation. He spoke to the conference and presented a paper. He said that Canada at this moment has a tax system which provides less recognition for the children of middle and upper income taxpayers than any of the G-7 countries.

We are not keeping up with our G-7 partners, not only in taxes, and Canadians face the highest income taxes of the G-7, but in terms of social policy. Canadian single income families are treated worse in this country than in any other G-7 country. That is clearly inappropriate.

Madam Speaker, I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Markham.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am afraid that the hon. member's time has expired. I was not aware that he was splitting his time.

**Mr. Scott Brison:** Madam Speaker, I ask for the consent of the House to split my time with the hon. member for Markham, and I apologize for not having asked at the outset.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to split his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1120)

**Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would ask my friend if he really believes that it is irresponsible to only spend what one has. Does he honestly believe that it is irresponsible government to use money which is available and spend it over time? Does he feel it is irresponsible to put in place, for instance, a millennium scholarship fund when it can be afforded by the country and bring Canada into the 21st century, hopefully with the most highly educated Canadian citizens we have ever had? Does he feel that putting money that is available now into a trust to be spent in future years is irresponsible?

A few years back the member's predecessors speculated on whether there would be a surplus or a shortfall in the year to come. When there was a shortfall of perhaps \$10 billion, which was the average shortfall, some excuse would be given to explain why targets had not been met. We were told that it was external influences over which we had no control.

This government is simply doing its accounting in a different way. It is not spending what it does not have. I ask him, in all sincerity, if he considers that to be irresponsible.

**Mr. Scott Brison:** Madam Speaker, I think there is some confusion on that side of the House.

The money in the fiscal surplus belongs to Canadians, who have borne the brunt of deficit reduction. It was an effort that began as early as 1984. In fact the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition

has said in the House that it was the structural changes made in the Canadian economy which allowed the current government to pay down its deficit. Those structural changes included free trade, the GST and the deregulation of financial services and transportation which began under the previous government.

The money belongs to Canadians. Canadians need that money to be invested immediately or it should be given back to them through tax reduction. Canadians need tax relief now, not in the future, not 10 years down the road. They need it now and they need significant tax relief now. While Canadians are pleased that the government is in the black, they have never been in the red to a greater extent than they are right now.

The government took \$2.5 billion out of last year's budget to spend down the road. If a small business person were to practise that kind of accounting Revenue Canada would be breathing down their neck. Action would be taken against them. They would have to hire an accountant to defend them against the government.

It is not good bookkeeping and it is certainly not good economics. The money that is taken out of this year's surplus should benefit Canadians who need a break now and tax relief now, and who need better investment in health care now.

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Madam Speaker, as industry critic for the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-71, the budget implementation act, a Liberal budget that completely fails to address the root causes of Canada's low productivity.

In a speech delivered in Toronto on February 18 the Minister of Industry cited Canada's need for more business investment, the importance of more foreign investment to develop new technology and the significance of higher innovation. The minister also said that Canada's productivity growth over the past 25 years was the worst in the G-7. I was pleased that last month the Leader of the Reform Party and the member for Medicine Hat followed my lead in question period in highlighting the industry minister's lack of confidence in the Canadian economy.

The Minister of Industry is not alone in his assessment of Canada's weak productivity. At a conference last month, just a few minute's walk from Parliament Hill at the Chateau Laurier, Nesbitt Burns economist Sherry Cooper called Canada's productivity the worst in the industrial world.

• (1125)

The Liberal Party's own pollster, Michael Marzolini, added that Canada has the worst rate of productivity among our G-7 competitors.

The Liberals have attempted to portray anybody who questions Canada's weak productivity as an enemy of Canada who does not want Canada to succeed.

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Although I can understand some of the rhetoric, I challenge the Liberals. Is Sherry Cooper an enemy of Canada? Does the Liberal Party pollster not want Canada to succeed? Was the Minister of Industry wrong when he spoke to the Empire Club in February in Toronto about Canada's weak productivity, low foreign investment, high tax burden and declining standard of living?

The PC party believes that the priority to improve Canada's productivity should be on tax relief and less red tape. Let me be clear. I do not criticize the government for increased funding for organizations such as the National Research Council or the Canadian Space Agency.

The fundamental problem with the government is that it ignores the best approach to increase the business investment needed to improve productivity: low business taxes, a lower regulatory burden and less debt.

There is an ancient Chinese proverb which says that it is not the heavily taxed realm that executes great deeds, it is the moderately taxed one. Canada needs to follow these wise words.

High taxes hurt our economy and threaten future economic growth. They discourage investment by businesses and individuals. This in turn limits employment opportunities and lowers tax revenues used to fund social programs.

Although our country is often cited by the United Nations and the Prime Minister as the best country in the world, we received a clear warning at January's world economic forum in Davos, Switzerland. Meeting participants, comprised of many of the world's business leaders, said that future economic prospects did not look bright and that heavily taxed and heavily indebted countries are particularly at risk.

Despite the rhetoric from the government, Canada qualifies as being both overtaxed and deeply indebted. In particular, we need to address the heavy tax burden of businesses.

Corporations are often the target of people frustrated with the economy. We will no doubt hear from some, especially the NDP, the Bloc, and to some extent the Liberals, that if only big, bad corporations paid their full share average working people would be better off. Of course this fair share concept implies that large corporations do not pay a heavy amount of taxes. It also suggests that Canada can raise taxes on corporations without any negative impact on the economy and our social programs.

In fact there are some who believe that our economy and social programs would actually improve if corporations paid more tax. Indeed it was the confused Minister of Industry who said last December that high taxes should increase productivity.

Let us take a look at the facts about business taxation. The first myth is that corporations are getting off scot-free. The reality is that since the Liberals took office in 1993 corporate income tax revenue has more than doubled.

Canada's combined federal-provincial general corporate income tax rate averages 43%, four percentage points higher than comparable rates in the United States, our number one competitor.

Moreover, Canada's corporate taxes are 9% higher than the average G-7 country, some of the most important economic countries in the world, including the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany and Japan. Over the past 30 years the total tax contributions made by Canadian corporations, including payroll, sales, property and income taxes, has jumped 144%.

Many of those taxes are not even dependent on whether a corporation is profitable. The federal Department of Finance estimates that 70% of the taxes which businesses pay are not related to any profit whatsoever. Meanwhile, according to the Conference Board of Canada, for every single dollar in extra profit made by corporations in the past 30 years a full 62 cents was clawed back in taxes.

Corporations have not been untouched by the tax collector. In fact one could make a strong argument in favour of lowering the tax burden of businesses.

Our G-7 partners, on average, have lower corporate rates than Canada.

• (1130)

Meanwhile, other developing countries such as Ireland, Mexico, Hungary and Singapore are positioning themselves through low or non-existent corporate taxes as attractive locations for business investment, business investment which, according to the Minister of Industry, is needed for higher productivity.

Companies are mobile. They can choose where to invest their dollars, where to create jobs and where to pay taxes which in turn fund social programs. Companies can also decide where to conduct research and development and where to commercialize innovation. In short, companies are free to choose where to contribute to a productive economy. They are not choosing Canada.

Let us look at the result of Canada's high corporate tax policies. While we became the place to pick the pockets of business, foreign investment dried up. According to the United Nations' report on world investment, Canada's share of direct foreign investment fell by 50% from 1985 to 1995. More recent figures put the drop closer to 60% over a 15 year period. The United States, with a more

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favourable business tax climate, saw its share increase by 4%. That is very significant. The government knows that our corporate tax structure is a problem. There are other factors to consider beside the corporate income tax rate.

The federal Department of Industry commissioned an independent study in conjunction with the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters Canada to determine whether changes in the corporate tax structure would benefit the economy. The study was conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein of Carleton University in Ottawa and the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dr. Bernstein's analysis examined five different taxes and investment elements, including corporate income and payroll tax rates, capital cost allowance of plant and equipment, research and development, and investment tax credits.

Dr. Bernstein's report concluded that the existing corporate tax structure is an inefficient means of raising government revenue and that the reduction of corporate income taxes for manufacturers through the provision of an enhanced manufacturing and processing tax credit would provide the most significant benefits to the Canadian economy.

The report also inferred that a corporate tax increase of \$100 million, relatively small in a \$150 billion budget, would kill up to 627 jobs, the equivalent of six average manufacturing plants. Furthermore, a \$100 million reduction in R and D credits would kill up to 3,000 jobs.

Each of these lost jobs have an impact. The person working at the job pays more taxes than they would if they were unemployed. The person is also not dependent on income security programs. It is a simple economic formula. More jobs equals less social and economic problems, equals a higher standard of living.

The viability and profitability of private enterprises are essential to the Canadian economy. We cannot have a strong economy that benefits socially as a whole without a strong private sector.

This budget does nothing to address one of the main causes of Canada's low productivity nor does it deal with the problem of government regulation. In particular, the government did not make a single change to the cost recovery program the Liberals introduced in 1994. There is nothing wrong with a cost recovery program that is based on reasonable fees, increased efficiency and smarter performance. Credible evidence suggests that the present program has no such grounding.

A recent report prepared by the Business Coalition of Cost Recovery, representing small, medium and large firms that employ 2.2 million Canadians and contribute \$330 billion to the national

economy, detailed the devastating impact of the federal cost recovery program since 1994.

Canada's manufacturers have been subject to a massive 153% increase in regulatory fees. User fees through cost recovery are among the fastest growing costs of doing business in Canada—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Order, please. I am afraid I must interrupt the hon. member. His time has run out.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today to Bill C-71.

Bill C-71 is an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in parliament on February 16 and other measures announced in previous budgets.

• (1135 )

This bill is about spending money. Budgets are all about spending money and where the money will come from. Today we need to make it clear where the money is coming from. Sometimes when I hear people talk, in particular politicians, it is as if the government has a stash of money that in its wisdom it doles out.

This money really comes from Canadians and from the work of Canadians. It comes from taxi drivers who spend 12 or more hours a day sitting in vehicles and driving around their cities. It comes from hairdressers and barbers who stand on their feet all day cutting hair. It comes from nurses and teachers. It comes from people in sales who pound the pavement or drive all over the country to promote the goods and services that Canadians produce. It comes from all kinds of workers. It even comes from our pages who still do pay some tax on their huge earnings from this House. I see them smiling so I am not sure how huge that is. We are talking about Canadians' money, money earned from long hours, dedication and a commitment to production by Canadians. We need to keep that in mind.

This bill, as most budgets are, in particular budgets running into the billions, is very complex. It is difficult for Canadians to unravel the ins and outs of how their money is going to be spent. It is our job in this House and in a democracy to give Canadians that information so they will be able to judge whether their government is doing a good job and whether their money is being wisely spent. They have a right to that information and it is our responsibility, because we get paid to do so, to provide them with that information. They can then make the judgment as to whether they want to continue with that kind of spending.

This bill is divided into nine parts each dealing with some different aspects of spending. As one might expect, members of my party, members of the opposition, members of the government and I agree with some elements of the budget and disagree with others. Unfortunately the process does not allow parliamentarians to be

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specific in their vote on what they support or on what they oppose. The vote is on implementation as a whole, all nine parts and their elements.

The vote on the budget is about the whole budget. Even though there are things we will want to support and things we will not want support, we do not get to pick and choose. In my view the government plays on this dishonestly by sometimes saying "Reform does not support the national child benefit". What it is really saying is that Reform, by not voting for the budget, does not support the national child benefit which was in the budget. We are now unjustly accused by the government of failing to support some things because we had to vote against the budget as a whole. There were too many bad things in it. Parliamentarians now find themselves in a quandary.

The opportunity today to speak on the specifics of implementing the budget is very welcome. We are able to talk about things we support, the things we think the government did right and to hold the government to account for things we think it did wrong.

What does this budget say to the average taxpayer? Liberal governments are very expensive today, as they have been for the past 30 years. That is number one. The Liberals plan on spending \$156.7 billion in this next fiscal year.

• (1140)

From March 31, 1999 to March 31, 2000 the government will spend \$156.7 billion. That is \$5,200 for each man, woman and child in Canada. It is about \$21,000 on average from each family of four. For those out in the real world who are earning money today, \$21,000 from the average family of four will be taken and spent by the government. That is a lot of work. It is a lot of hours sitting on that chair, Madam Speaker. We need to take this seriously and be good stewards of that hard-earned money.

This is not only a lot of money but we have to measure it against the fact that \$21,000 from the average family of four may be coming from a wage of less than twice that amount. The average wage in 1998 was \$37,400. The government spends over half of what an average single income family of four earns. I guess the government is so brilliant it can spend our money better than we can. We are going to examine that premise because clearly that is the premise the government operates on.

Are Canadians getting value from the Liberal government for their money? Are Canadians getting a fair return from this really punishing tax rate that is necessary to maintain the government's lifestyle?

When we look closer at the numbers we see that the government will spend \$156.7 billion. However, over \$42 billion or 27% of that amount will be spent to pay for the overspending of the past. In other words, 27% of what the government spends is deferred taxes. We are making up for the fact that governments did not manage

their money wisely in the past. For every dollar of spending the government delivers only 73 cents in the form of programs. Even that is often wastefully managed. This is hardly value for money for today's taxpayer.

If this Liberal government and previous Liberal governments, and Mr. Clark and Mr. Mulroney at the time of the free spending Tories, had been more sensible about spending Canadians would have had that \$42.5 billion today for programs or tax cuts rather than paying this enormous amount of interest on the debt. Each budget we see from the government is a continued testimony to its incompetence as trustees of the taxpayers' dollars throughout most of the last 30 years. The enormous sum of \$42.5 billion is not available to us to spend on the things we think are important today. Most of us would struggle to put \$42.5 billion into any kind of an understandable framework. I would like to help us do that.

Forty-two and a half billion dollars is about twice the amount of all income tax paid by all businesses in Canada in a year. The interest of \$42.5 billion represents about twice the GST collected in Canada in a year. In other words, if we had that money, if we had not overspent and if we did not have to pay interest we could eliminate the GST, something government members said they would do. We could eliminate the GST completely and still have another \$20 billion left over to spend on things that are important to us.

Here is another way to look at it. Let us go to the farthest eastern point in Canada, Cape Spear, Newfoundland and start laying \$20 bills right across Canada to the farthest western point, the Yukon-Alaska border. By that time we would have walked 5,514 kilometres. Each \$20 bill is 15.3 centimetres long or about about six inches. One kilometre equals 6,536 \$20 bills so every kilometre we walk we lay over 6,000 \$20 bills. Just over 36 million, 36,039,504 to be exact, \$20 bills would be needed to cover the distance from Cape Spear to the Alaska border. The total value of those bills would be about \$720 million.

• (1145)

Seven hundred and twenty million dollars will pay 1.7% of the annual interest on our debt. In other words, if we laid \$20 bills right across Canada, from its furthest point east to its furthest point west, we would have laid down enough money to pay only 1.7% of our total interest that we cough up every year on our debt. We would need 59 times those bills in order to pay the entire interest. There would be stacks 59 bills high all the way across Canada. That is how much our interest is.

Now visualize this. We would have to have 59 \$20 bills in each stack, but if the bills were around the equator, which is about 40,000 kilometres, \$5.2 billion would be required, about one-eighth of the taxes required in this budget to finance our national debt for the next year, to put \$20 bills around the equator. The



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stacks would be eight high around the middle of the world to pay the entire interest.

What if we were going to the moon? The moon is on average 382,000 kilometres from the earth. That would take a lot of years to drive, but if we laid \$20 bills to the moon we would need 2.5 billion bills. That is about \$50 billion, which is about 14 months worth of the interest we pay on the national debt to continue our trip all the way to the moon. That \$50 billion is only about one-twelfth of our national debt.

I go through these things because it is important to remind ourselves of how our overspending and our fiscal mismanagement in the past hangs over us today. It limits our choices both collectively and individually.

I do not often take editorial writers and columnists as unimpeachable sources but I was particularly struck by a piece that Jeffrey Simpson wrote in the *Globe and Mail* on March 10. I would like to quote a couple of the observations he made. They were very penetrating analyses of our situation.

Jeffrey Simpson said "Debt is the past's dead hand lying on the future". It is the future of our children and grandchildren and the future of the pages here. We have mortgaged their future with this debt. He went on to say "The future is all about flexibility, human skills, innovation, investment, adaptability, yet only a fraction of total government spending points in that direction. Far more is spent on yesterday's obligations than tomorrow's opportunities".

That is a sad, sad message with this debt, with this interest and with this Liberal budget. Far more is spent on yesterday's obligations than on tomorrow's opportunities. That is something we cannot be proud of and which we must rectify.

I am going to make government members happy by talking for a period of time about what we like in this budget and what we support.

We like the fact that the Liberals have been forced to put back some of the billions they slashed from their support for health care. Their support for health care was already pretty meagre. When the Liberals brought health care in, they promised to support it 50% with the provinces. Today their support is just over 20%. That is what Liberal promises are worth. But they did have to put some of that money back, about half of it. For every dollar they slashed, over the next five years they will put about half of that back in, which is good. We support that.

• (1150)

As far as our party position is concerned, we have consistently been committed to protecting support for health care. We were calling for urgent and significant cuts in government spending in

1990. Even at that time when overspending was rampant, there were deficits and overspending by billions and billions of dollars every year, we still spoke out strongly on the need to protect spending in the two critical areas of education and health care.

In 1993 we put out a zero in three budget. We made some adjustments to government spending so that the books would be balanced, but none of those cuts came from health care or education.

In 1995 we did something unprecedented in the House. We put out an alternative budget to the government budget. The understanding was that the overspending every year was just about \$40 billion, nearly as much as we are spending on interest today. In spite of that enormous overspending, we took virtually nothing from health care and education in order to balance the books.

With the books being closer to being balanced leading up to the next election, our campaign was to restore some of the billions the Liberals had slashed from health care and education. Our support for these programs has been consistent in our documents. This is unlike the Liberals. I grieve to say this because government members got up in this House and with their hands over their hearts and talked about fighting to the death, going to the barricades for health care and the Canada Health Act. What were the Liberals doing in the back rooms? They were slashing \$7 billion from transfers for that program. That is what they were doing.

We are glad to see that the Liberals have finally come to their senses and due to pressure from Canadians are putting some of that money back. We will continue to support the return of funds that were taken away from health care and support health care being given a high priority.

The Reform Party has always advocated increased government recognition of the importance of the family unit. We have called for several tax relief measures to ensure that families keep a larger share of their earnings to meet the needs of their children. We recognize the contribution that parents make to society and the future of all of us through the birth and nurturing of children.

Canada's birth rate is dropping. Many of our programs are premised on workers, a strong workforce with secure jobs and secure incomes contributing to the kind of social programs, the safety net which many Canadians say, and certainly the government has said, defines Canada. It is one of the defining features of our country. But with our birth rate dropping and, contrary to popular belief, not being compensated for by immigration, we are in jeopardy. We all have a stake, if our pensions and other programs are to continue, in having a strong workforce of younger Canadians. We believe that we have a responsibility to assist children.

I have spoken often in support of the national child benefit system as a good example of the co-operation needed among federal, provincial and territorial governments to improve the

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quality of our social programs. It is a good program, but more can be done.

There is a lot we do not like in this budget. I have left it to my colleagues, many of whom have already spoken and many of whom will speak, to outline some of our very serious concerns. I have confined my remarks to the interest, the mortgage on our children's future, on the social safety net and on our programs.

In conclusion, I ask the government to lift the heavy hand of debt on our future and to move ahead to something better for our children and grandchildren.

• (1155)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague very eloquently put forward the views of my party in reference to the budget. I would like to ask her a question.

Recently, that brave lady, Beverly Smith, met with the Secretary of State for the Status of Women. Beverly Smith is a single parent who has been fighting the unfair taxation burden on single parents. She came out of that meeting very disappointed with the impression that the minister is giving lip service to the burden on single parents.

I would like to ask my colleague what she thinks about that meeting. How can we help Beverly Smith bring forward her concerns?

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Madam Speaker, as you know, on this issue of single income families we have had a lively debate and a number of questions in this House. I thank my colleague for this question because we simply cannot let this issue die. It is far too important to our country's families.

There have been so many quotes over the years that families are the cradle of civilization, the birthplace of our leaders of tomorrow. Families are so important and so critical. Simply, the resources have to be in the families' hands to do their job and the work we have given them to do.

As my colleague from Calgary East has rightly pointed out, people in this country are fighting vigorously for tax fairness for single income families, whether they be one or two parent families trying to do a difficult job. In meeting with ministers and the minister my colleague referred to, they come away discouraged with the feeling there is not a recognition, there is not the vigorous support and affirmation for parents that there should be, that the parents' role is not honoured in the way it should be, that their resources are expendable even though the job they are doing is critical.

I can pledge to Canadians and to this House that the Reform Party, and I believe many members of this House, will not rest until there is tax fairness, until tax discrimination is removed, until the stealth taxes and the creeping deindexation of our basic exemptions

are fought and conquered so that families and parents have the proper resources.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Jonquière.

I am pleased to take the floor today to discuss Bill C-71, the Budget Implementation Act, 1999. This is a kind of omnibus bill in order to implement the budget. Among other things, it contains some items relating to tax arrangements between the federal government and the provinces, and to the Canadian Forces super-annuation plan, some changes to the Financial Administration Act and an increase to the National Child Benefit, and it broadens GST credit eligibility for single individuals.

I would like to go into more detail on the reasons the Bloc Québécois is opposed to this bill. There are three key elements of particular concern to us.

The first is that it contains the famous change to the method of calculating the Canada social transfer. The government is using this bill to legalize the fact that it has unilaterally decided to change the rules that determine the social transfer, going to a system that is solely demographics based, and setting a per capita amount for each of the provinces.

The consequences of this amendment alone will be to deprive Quebec of \$350 million, or 8.3% of the \$11.3 billion increase contained in this budget.

Such a decision is somewhat out of line with the very principle of the Canada social transfer, since the purpose of the CHST is to help decrease the inequalities between provinces, particularly where poverty is concerned.

• (1200)

This unilateral decision indicates once again the fact that the federal system is not always a good thing for the provinces. It will compel them to rethink their forecasting methods. A province may have decided to follow one course of action expecting a certain sum from the federal government. This change obliges Quebec and others to completely review the allocation of the money the federal government transfers to them. That sort of runs contrary to the objective of the program. Quebecers will have to learn from this.

This fact is particularly true in a period of surplus. The federal government and the provincial governments are enjoying a surplus. Canadians share one major concern—how we will fight poverty.

It is not enough in our societies to have the highest gross national product. We must also assess our governments' efficiency at distributing this wealth.

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We saw no original proposal in the budget for fighting the very negative effects of child poverty, among other things. The measure before us will not enable us to fight this situation either. Under it money will be allocated only according to the demographics of a given province and not according to its economic situation and social problems. This is the first reason the Bloc Québécois will be voting against the bill, unless it is amended.

The second reason is the increase in the child tax benefit. We are delighted that the federal government has finally listened to reason and added funds to the amount initially provided, to total the \$2 billion the Bloc Québécois identified a few years back as the minimum required to ensure worthwhile results.

The sad part is that the money will be available, but over several years. The fight against poverty will not have the same effect as if there were a massive investment. Still, the measure is a step in the right direction.

I think the federal government could have made more of an effort, as far as spreading out its spending is concerned. It could have arranged to have the moneys available more quickly, particularly since we are in a period of budget surplus. Instead, the funding for the child tax benefit is spread over several years.

By contrast, the accumulation of surpluses in the employment insurance fund was not spread over several years. Year in year out for the past four or five years, the government has systematically taken very significant amounts from the EI surpluses. This is money that is not being used to fund the employment insurance fund, but any other type of federal spending, including payments on the debt. There is a lack of logic with this approach. On the one hand, the government is putting money back for the child tax benefit, while on the other hand it is generating poverty by having an inadequate employment insurance fund that does not allow the unemployed to have a decent income when they find themselves between jobs.

The federal government should have done more in that regard. It should have included, in the measures to implement the budget, something to correct the unfairness in the current employment insurance program. But there are no such measures in this legislation.

The non-indexing of tax tables is also a reflection of the inadequate effort made by the federal government to correct the flaws in our tax system. For example, between 1986 and 1996, Quebec residents have suffered a cumulative loss of income which was caused exclusively by the federal government's decision not to fully index tax tables based on the CPI increase.

This has resulted in a shortfall of \$7,047 for people who would have made good use of that money and who actually needed it. This money would not have been used for luxury items, but for daily expenses such as buying groceries or paying rent, thus allowing these people to contribute to the national economy while also

providing for their families' basic needs. In that regard, the federal government did not meet the objectives that we had in mind.

• (1205)

Of course, a bill such as this one to implement provisions of the budget cannot add to what was announced in the budget speech. Many oversights were identified. The federal government focussed on health issues, but strong anti-poverty action was needed as well.

When assessing our society's achievements, we must look not only at our capacity to produce consumer goods, but also at whether the resulting wealth is being distributed fairly throughout the community, providing people with enough money.

Last week, I attended a presentation made in my region by Vivian Labrie, who is advocating anti-poverty legislation and who made it very clear that most of what people receive they need for their survival, for vital expenses such as food and lodging. There are also functional expenditures, such as those for travel and moving, and some which could be described as luxuries for high income earners.

Nowadays, we should be more aware that each additional dollar freed up for those who earn just enough to get by has a much greater impact than an equivalent reduction in the taxes of someone with an annual income of \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$70,000. It means much more to those receiving social assistance or EI, or earning minimum wage. An additional \$1, \$10 or \$20 tax break for such a person has a far greater impact on their daily life, and this is something I think we should be aware of.

In conclusion, we feel that this bill to implement certain provisions of the budget is unacceptable because the change in the CHST formula hits Quebec hard. The bill also fails to provide for a sufficient increase in the child tax benefit—we would have liked to see a higher increase—and it does not address the problem created by the fact that the tax tables are not indexed.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will be voting against the bill.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to what the member had to say. He mentioned the child tax benefit. I think his comment was that it was a step in the right direction.

I was a great supporter of the initiative by the government, the attempt at the federal level to reach down to children all over the country to try to alleviate child poverty, which is such a serious problem.

It is not a problem but it is a fact of life that the federal government has to deal with each province separately in these

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matters. In the case of the province of Ontario, the agreement we effectively had was that if the federal government were to allocate large funds to the children of poor families, the Ontario government made the rule that it would take away an equivalent amount of money from people on social assistance. It would apply the money it had saved to the children of poor families but the children of poor working families. It seems this is a serious mistake and a serious fault in logic. Surely we want to help all children in poverty. In some ways we particularly want to help those on social assistance.

My question for the member is from my own information. How does the province of Quebec handle this same matter? Did the province of Quebec have the same condition of taking money away from families on social assistance and applying those moneys to the families of the working poor, or did the province of Quebec proceed to allocate the child tax benefit to all poor children no matter what the source of income of their families?

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention.

I will remind him why the Bloc Québécois finds the measure unsatisfactory. In 1997, we called for this fund to contain \$2 billion, and with the present government measures, that \$2 billion will be reached, but in the year 2000.

The impact needed to be far greater than that. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development:

—Canada's performance is extremely poor in comparison with the low income levels of nine countries for families with children. It barely manages to rank eighth for market income . . . and seventh for total income after taxes and government transfers.

In other words, compared with nine similar countries, Canada ranks second highest in child poverty according to market income, and third for total income, after the United States and Australia. We have some catching up to do, and in our opinion we should have caught up faster.

The second part of my colleague's question addressed how the Government of Quebec had handled this.

Negotiations were held between the provinces and the federal government. The agreement was that the additional amounts put in by the federal government could be used by the provinces for other expenses. That led, among other things, to the \$5 daycare policy, which gave 70% of parents with young children the opportunity to significantly reduce the money paid to daycare centres. I think that was a worthwhile measure.

However, in connection with the child tax benefit, I think people everywhere in Canada would agree child poverty should be attacked directly and more aggressively. It is in this sense that the Bloc Québécois hoped that the money allocated would be available more quickly and that the fact there is a surplus this year would mean it would be allocated quickly.

July 1999 and not July 2000 could have been set as the time limit for the \$2 billion. The people affected by these measures do not eat over the long term, but every day, and they need money quickly. As we can afford this measure as a society, we could act now.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-71, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget, and to say from the outset that I will vote against this legislation.

My speech will deal with four specific points, which I will develop.

This sixth Martin budget, the first so-called deficit free Liberal budget, is a crying shame.

First, it formalizes the misappropriation of funds by the federal government, at the expense of thousands of Canadian workers who cannot get employment insurance benefits.

Second, this budget does not reflect any will to help older workers who lose their jobs following plant closures.

Third, as regards the environment, where are the necessary moneys to fulfil the commitments made in Kyoto?

Fourth, this budget gives legal status to the federal government's will to encroach freely on provincial jurisdictions, by getting fully involved in areas of jurisdiction in which it has simply no business.

However, no matter how shocking and outrageous the Liberal government's attitude may be, it does not surprise anyone. About this time last year, when it tabled its previous budget, this government showed its true colours.

We then saw a Prime Minister of Canada who wanted to go down in history by creating a monument to his own glory. I am referring to the millennium scholarships.

Members opposite are getting all worked up. If the government really wants to help young people, why does it not transfer the moneys to the provinces, which are responsible for the loans and scholarships programs?

Quebec has the best loans and scholarships system. Our program adequately meets the needs of young people. Why not recognize excellence and give to the Quebec government additional funding to ensure a sound management of that initiative, instead of duplicating an efficient system?

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• (1215)

That was a year ago. Now, the Minister of Finance, our master magician, our sleight of hand specialist, is getting into the act and unveiling his own monument. He did not want to be outdone. For weeks, he laid the groundwork. Day after day, he told us to wait for the budget.

Now we are considering the budget and what do we see? We see a Minister of Finance completely lacking in long term vision, a Minister of Finance whose concerns are all short term and motivated by political gain. What a bitter disappointment this is for all these workers and middle income earners.

In his new budget, the Minister of Finance is determined to conceal his surpluses rather than turn them over to unemployed workers and middle income earners.

Having contributed to the acknowledged \$4.5 billion surplus in the EI fund, six out of ten Quebeckers and Canadians who lose their jobs will still not qualify for benefits. Many of my colleagues have spoken at length in the House about the unfortunate and very harmful impact of EI reform on women, pregnant women and young people. What the minister is doing is no small matter. Workers and employers contribute to this fund. The federal government has not put in one red cent in over ten years.

In this budget, where are the proactive measures, particularly those for older workers over the age of 50? Thousands of people in the various regions of the country will be affected by plant closures or massive layoffs. Where are the concrete measures in this budget to help them?

This government has abolished the program especially designed for them, POWA. Did these workers not contribute to the employment insurance fund for years? Many of them have never drawn benefits. This is an essential measure for them. The billions of surplus dollars that have accumulated must be used for this purpose, among other things.

Why has this minister not been listening to the thousands of workers by introducing such an active and positive measure in this budget? Perhaps the answer is obvious.

Where are the concrete messages to the middle-class taxpayer? Are these not the people who have made it possible for the Minister of Finance to do away with his deficit? Why has he not used part of his hidden surpluses to adjust the tax tables to the cost of living, thus putting \$2 billion back into the economy?

To give an example from my riding, one of my constituents wrote me on January 22 to express his outrage at the unjust treatment of couples with a family income of \$50,000 a year, when the wife does not work outside the home. Such a couple pays \$4,000 more taxes yearly than a couple with both spouses working.

He describes this as “unfair”, and is waiting for a response and a correction of the situation.

As my party’s critic on the environment, I was greatly disappointed that the budget did not show any willingness, on the part of the government, to act in this area. Yet there is extreme urgency. This government is already behind on the formal commitments it made at Kyoto on eliminating greenhouse gases. And what about the elimination of 5,000 contaminated sites? Where is the money to get started on decontamination?

What about highway rehabilitation? Where is the funding for this? When is there going to be any follow-up on the \$16 billion proposal made last spring by all provincial ministers of transport to the Government of Canada, with the agreement of their ministers of finance?

Once again, I see that this is just a lot of fancy talk by the Liberals, with no willingness to do anything.

A few days ago, on March 29, the Minister of Transport told us he was trying to convince his cabinet colleagues to give him \$3.5 billion for this, whereas the provincial ministers of transport are talking about \$16 billion. It is always tomorrow, tomorrow, later, later. We see no willingness to act in this budget.

• (1220)

Where is the money for this year? When are they going to bring back programs such as the strategic highway improvement program, which all the provincial ministers of transports are calling for?

Quebeckers, particularly the people of the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, are not fooled by the fancy words repeated by petty politicians. The Conservatives did the same when they were in government between 1984 and 1992. They did nothing to improve roads, especially highway 175.

We in the Bloc Québécois are here to tell them the real truth, to defend them against these petty politicians, because Ottawa is not so far removed and we are well informed.

Another matter dear to my heart is regional development. From every podium, we hear this government saying that its first priority is regional development. Is there a bit of “Do as I say not as I do” here? I think this can be said of the Liberals. If there is one thing I am sure of, it is that in this budget, in black and white, spending on regional development was cut by \$100 million cut this year and \$200 million next year. Find the discrepancies between the words and the figures.

Our national Minister of Finance also treated himself to a monument in this budget, the find of the century, the health care budget.

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Canadians are not fooled. They know very well that the Liberal government is responsible for the deterioration in this country's health care system. They know the real story, not what the government would have them believe.

Since 1994, the government has slashed provincial transfer payments for health, education and social assistance by over \$6.5 billion. The Liberal government is to blame for the terrible repercussions on the entire health system from coast to coast.

Underlying the Minister of Finance's new health budget is a dark history of billions of dollars in cuts that have hit the public very hard, and we must never forget it.

With the support of his colleague, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance is now charging into the health sector, a provincial jurisdiction, and imposing his views, new structures, statistics, monitoring, and additional paperwork. The final cost will be \$1.4 billion over three years. This money will not benefit the sick; no, this government prefers to spend \$400 million on administration alone just for the visibility.

What is the word for this? Irresponsible. But I say to the Minister of Finance that it is not too late. The minister should show some compassion and hand over these millions of dollars to the provinces with no strings attached so that the public can finally get the care to which it is entitled.

In conclusion, for all these reasons, and for all the other reasons my Bloc Québécois colleagues have mentioned in their speeches, I will be voting against Bill C-71.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Jonquière for her good speech. I want to ask her a question concerning a very important point she raised, namely the issue of older workers.

The Minister of Human Resources Development keeps telling us that active measures are in place for these people. Could the member for Jonquière elaborate on the fact that, in the case of older workers—those aged 55 and over—active measures are often not enough, and passive measures are also necessary? The word "passive" may sound derogatory, but we are referring to support measures to help these workers make it to retirement. Would it not have been appropriate to include such initiatives in the budget?

Furthermore, is the hon. member pleased that the proposal made by the Bloc Québécois, for which she is the critic, resulted in this issue being submitted to the human resources development committee, which will look at it over the next two months and which will hear witnesses? Would the hon. member like to send an invitation to those who made representations to us and who would like to take part in the committee's work regarding this issue?

• (1225)

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my Bloc Québécois colleague.

The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques is a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. He succeeded in having the committee approve the proposal that we will review over the coming weeks regarding this very sensitive issue, and I thank him for that.

In the riding of Jonquière, between 200 and 300 workers will lose their jobs in the weeks to come. It is all fine and well to tell a worker between 50 and 55 years of age that he or she will get training, that he or she will be sent back to school, but these people need other things.

I thank the Bloc Québécois for having given me responsibility for this issue. I am asking all those interested in testifying before the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development to contact us. We will be very pleased to hear all their suggestions.

It is not true that this issue is really a priority for the government. The government is not providing proactive measures for this group of citizens. We will not let it get away with this. We will, along with all Canadians and Quebeckers, propose concrete measures.

[English]

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House for what might be one of my last times to talk about the budget.

The budget sets out a road map for the government. It gives an indication of its priorities and hopefully it gives an indication of the priorities of the population at large. The extent to which a budget is successful is the extent to which it represents the priorities of Canadians.

The government has made much of arguing the budget to be a health care budget, with which I will deal in a moment. If we look at that issue we see a government which has over the last five years cut over \$21 billion out of health care and is about to put \$2 billion back. This is not the kind of health care commitment that would qualify most budgets in the minds of most people as a health care budget.

The budget did many things and omitted many things. I will focus for a moment on the things it omitted and could have done in order to meet the priorities of Canadians. Canadians, as we know, face a number of crises at the present time. Canadians face a health care crisis which the budget addresses in a small way.

The population at large faces significant challenges with regard to job opportunities for both parents and younger people. The

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country also faces challenges with regard to the accessibility of students to education and a whole range of other questions including homelessness, our infrastructure problems and a tax system which remains extremely unfair.

The budget could have but did not address the priorities of Canadians with regard to their challenges in looking for work. The budget did nothing to increase the chances of any unemployed person finding work or of a person in a job feeling any greater security in terms of keeping that work.

The budget did nothing to improve the benefits for those most vulnerable in society, the unemployed, a group for which the federal government has responsibility in terms of its legislative jurisdictional powers over employment insurance and as a result of its control over fiscal and monetary tools which leads to certain levels of unemployment in the economy.

Over the last 10 or 11 years I have been in the House unemployment has been used as an economic tool for various other purposes dealing with interest rates, the value of the dollar and so on.

• (1230)

Nothing was done in the budget to combat the homelessness crisis with which we are all familiar. The Prime Minister has taken some steps since, but there is nothing in the budget or in the finance minister's set of priorities to ensure that those who are facing life's most severe problems, the unemployed and the homeless, have those matters addressed by the government. That is a priority which is askew.

There is nothing to address the unfair tax system. There is nothing to reduce the GST. As we all know, the government has given a tax break of \$8,000 to millionaires and a handful of dollars to those at the lowest income levels. This hardly addresses the problem. It seems to make the problem worse.

There are other things too. There is nothing in the budget to tackle what are environmental concerns across the country, even the simple issue like a transit pass being available to employees in the same way as parking passes are. This modest and easy to administer environmental change did not find its way into the budget. As we probably all know, there is no adequate or proper funding for our cultural institutions.

Major Canadian priorities are not being addressed in the budget even though some tax changes were made. A person who makes \$10,000 a year in income will receive from the budget tax savings of \$51, a dollar a week. A person who receives \$25,000 a year in income will receive a tax break of \$115. A person who receives a \$50,000 income will receive \$160. A person who receives a \$75,000 income will receive \$595. A person who receives a \$105,000 income will receive \$813.

The more we make the better off we will be. That is not the priority of those who are fighting to survive in what is an ever

increasingly challenging world. If one is making \$1 million a year one will get a \$8,000 tax break from the budget.

Let us remember all the fuss about whether or not hockey players should get tax breaks to stay in Canada. They did because those millionaire hockey players will get \$8,000 extra a year to play in Canada while a family trying to get by on \$10,000 will make \$51 a year more, probably not enough to buy one ticket to go to a hockey game to watch that millionaire hockey player who gets an \$8,000 tax break play in Canada.

Even where changes are made we see them made in the interest of those who are better off rather than in the interest of those who are less well off. We know our tax system is one of the most unfair in the developed world. Yet there is nothing here to make it more fair. Indeed we see a strategy of making it increasingly unfair.

Let me raise a few comments about health care spending. The government made much of the budget being a health care budget. Over the years of the Liberal government and over the years of the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard as the Minister of Finance, we have seen \$21.5 billion taken out of the health care system. Only a couple of provinces have been able to fill that gap.

In my province of Saskatchewan each year the NDP government has consistently put more money into health care than what the Liberals took out, at a great burden to a province with a small tax base and significant financial problems left over from nine years of provincial Conservative government mismanagement. The Saskatchewan NDP government saw health care as a priority, as did the residents of that province and Canadians as a whole, and thereby committed more money than was cut by the Liberal government in Ottawa.

• (1235)

What is the response of the Liberal government? As a result of the budget it will put back \$2 billion, one dollar for every ten that was taken out of health care. We know the angst across the country over the state of our health care system. That angst is exacerbated when billions of dollars are cut from the health care system.

This is a modest prescription for the health care crisis caused by the federal government over its years of belt tightening. This modest prescription will not satisfy the needs of Canadians or do anything very significant to improve our health care system.

I would add in terms of the priorities of the most recent budgets of the Liberal government that it is plain the brunt of deficit reduction was borne by the most vulnerable in society. That deficit reduction was called for and was necessary. The minister is to be credited for having steered Canada through this difficult time.

However, the way in which he did it meant that he attacked the most vulnerable in society. That is in sharp contrast with the way in which Saskatchewan balanced its budget, the first province to do

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so. There were increased commitments to the things that are most important to Canadians, not the Liberal model of increased cuts to the things that are most important to Canadians.

In that strategy, in that model of Saskatchewan NDP government's deficit reduction, we saw continued increases in funding for health care, education and social programs, not cuts. That is a distinct contrast with the way in which the deficits were addressed in the two jurisdictions.

We remain with some serious problems that could have been addressed by the government but were not. For example, as students have indicated the budget does nothing to solve student debt and the base funding crisis facing post-secondary education. Tuition fees will continue to rise while the quality of education continues to erode according to the students. Those of us who spend any time on university campuses can ensure that is the case. Without increasing accessibility, without increasing the numbers of Canadians who have access to post-secondary education, it is difficult to see how we can solve the economic difficulties we face.

On a personal note, as someone who is the only person from my extended family to attend university, and it was 30 years ago at least when I was at university, the question of accessibility is a critical one that we cannot leave in the state in which it is at present. It takes a lot of support for those who come from families who do not traditionally see university education or post-secondary education as a tool for their children to find a way to break through and to have access to post-secondary education.

It is an obligation of the country as a whole and of the government which represents the country to ensure that accessibility is there. It is the only way we will individually ensure that we can make the greatest contribution to our economy and to our society. Education is critical in this regard and yet nothing in the budget addresses this matter.

Children in poverty is surely the most serious problem we face. Not only Catholic bishops but practically everybody in the country has called this issue a national disgrace. There is nothing in the budget for Canada's poorest children, even though there is much rhetoric on this point in a number of committee reports and so on from the Liberal caucus.

There is nothing for homelessness, nothing for those who do not even have a place to live in what is one of the richest countries in the world. As the Minister of Finance indicated in the past, only the national government has the financial resources to address the full dimensions of this problem.

There is nothing for child care. We have the problem of parents, single parents in particular, wanting to access the job market, wanting to make a contribution and wanting to ensure their own

independence, being denied that opportunity simply because child care is out of their grasp. Either there is not enough accessible quality child care available to them or the cost is simply prohibitive. Again this is holding people back rather than enabling them to move forward.

• (1240 )

I mentioned the problems of our tax system and how unfair it is. Even a reduction in GST of 1% would have meant a lot to everyday people. The Minister of Finance could have taken a lesson from the Saskatchewan NDP government's book and in fact given everybody a break, particularly those on low income who spend all their money on the most basic items. There is no commitment to assisting those at the lowest end of the economic scale with a tax break.

Perhaps the most glaring omission is with regard to those who are unable to find work in Canada and are forced to rely on what is becoming an ever more meagre unemployment insurance system. There is nothing to address this concern. Indeed everyone has to be reminded that it is the employment insurance surplus which has made the deficit reduction record of the government as credible as it is. In other words the taking of money from those who are working and those who are unemployed in order to balance the country's books. This is not something many people would be proud of.

We face significant problems across the country both in highways and in other infrastructure elements. There is nothing in the budget for them.

While budgets set out a course of action and a set of priorities which should represent the priorities of Canadians, it is clear that the budget has not done that. More important, it has left the most vulnerable, the most in need, out of the picture almost entirely. That is to be regretted.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to state to my hon. colleague, the member from the province of Saskatchewan, since he mentioned that this may be one of the last speeches he makes in the House, that I consider him to be a very thoughtful contributor to the House of Commons. We wish him the best in his future endeavours as he moves into another venue.

Although his approach in terms of social democracy may be different from my fiscal conservative approach, he did highlight some priorities in terms of what the economy has to do. The best way to actually grow an economy in which we can make interventions with respect to education and our health care system is to lower taxes and lower our debt level. Then we could have a more vibrant private sector that would increase revenues. We have seen this in the province of Ontario where the Harris government has



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been able to lower taxes and therefore increase government revenues.

My comment to the hon. member is simple. I concur with his initiatives in terms of making post-secondary education more accessible, but government intervention is not necessarily and always the easy way out.

**Mr. Chris Axworthy:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's earlier comments. Of course I regard him as a friend as well.

The point the member makes is an interesting one. If it were the case that tax cuts were the answer to problems faced by countries at the turn of the century, we would see countries with very high tax burdens being totally unsuccessful in the economic ventures we see ourselves facing. Countries with high taxes like Germany have very successful economies. There is no panacea to tax cuts as an instrument of ensuring economic success.

We would all favour lower taxes rather higher taxes, but in the context of ensuring that we provide the kinds of services Canadians demand, not just want, we need to ensure the level of taxation is adequate to meet those demands.

I would not necessarily put the member who spoke in this category, but the unfortunate aspect of those who argue for tax cuts is that it is a smoke screen for eliminating social services, social programs and government initiatives that those people find undesirable but the population at large finds quite desirable, continues to vote for and continues to see as important.

• (1245)

Health care is perhaps the greatest example of this. It seems that people will always take health care over tax cuts. There is no clamour across the country for the kind of tax cuts which the Reform Party and to some extent the Conservative Party argue for. People know they have to pay taxes for the services they need and they know there is a balance. The appropriate question is how to find that balance.

Plainly we do not have that balance with the present unfair tax system. I recognize that we cannot have a tax system that is far out of whack with our competitors' tax systems if we expect to be able to compete with them in terms of ensuring that our young people stay in this country to work, in terms of ensuring that employers invest in Canada and in terms of ensuring that we are competitive.

Canadians deserve tax cuts. I do not believe they should be the millionaires who received an \$8,000 tax cut; they should be the people making \$10,000 who only got a \$51 tax cut. I would rather have given them something more meaningful than giving some-

thing to the millionaires. We need a more fair tax system which also reflects our international competitive situation.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about tax cuts. The member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar is a little off track when he talks about who should get tax cuts. It is middle income working Canadians who have continuously borne the brunt of the tax burden. They pay far higher personal income taxes than those in any of the G-7 countries. We pay the highest.

Although there is ample evidence, the member does not recognize that there is a direct correlation between a buoyant economy and a liveable tax regime. We do not have that in this country. The governments of Alberta and Ontario have taken some bold steps to lower the personal income tax levels of provincial workers. Those are the two leading economies in the entire country. Despite the tax cuts, their overall revenues have dramatically increased because their economies were given that stimulant.

In order to make this country attractive for investors, in order to restore consumer confidence and in order to give Canadian families a break in this country, in particular middle income families, this government has to recognize that it has an obligation. Considering that it has raised taxes to the tune of \$39 billion or \$40 billion since 1993, considering that the average Canadian worker's net income has decreased about \$2,100, considering that the average family's disposable income in this country has decreased by \$4,500 since this tax-mad Liberal government took over, I think the member would agree that this government is morally obligated to give Canadians a break in the income taxes they are paying. That is what will get the economy going again and that is what will provide money for social programs.

**Mr. Chris Axworthy:** Madam Speaker, the member will know that the primary beneficiaries of the tax cuts he mentioned in Ontario and Alberta are the wealthy, not middle income Canadians. I share his view that it is the middle income Canadians who face the brunt of our tax system. In the 10 years I have been here we have seen middle income Canadians face an ever increasing tax burden. As a result of the important and necessary attack on the deficit they have seen themselves receive less and less in return. They are not getting good value for their money. They know that. That is the reason they are so disgruntled.

• (1250)

However, it is still the case across the country, no matter what the Reform Party says, that Canadians recognize the importance of the kinds of services that define the country—health care, education and social programs—and the need for those services to be paid for by tax revenues. That support, no matter what the Reform Party says, is there. It is there solidly and it will not go away.

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**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I wish to seek consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, during consideration of Government Order, Government Business number 23, any speech by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition may be followed by a ten minute period for questions and comments and the House shall continue to sit after 6.30 p.m. this day for the purpose of considering the said Government Order, provided that after 6.30 p.m. the Chair shall not receive any quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent to propose any motion and provided that when no member rises the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to proceed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate the hon. House leader's point; however, we in the Reform Party would wish to be consulted just a bit more on this motion before we give concurrence.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** There is not consent at this time, so the House will resume debate.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the budget implementation act.

I will start by quoting from today's morning smile in *The Globe and Mail*. There is a sign at the dry cleaner's which reads "We charge GST, PST, EHT, UIC, WCB and a small fee for cleaning". A small fee for cleaning. That is the livelihood of that small businessman. That sign talks about the economic conditions in this country.

We are in the middle of the tax season, the time when Canadians realize how much they pay to the government. It is not a pretty picture.

Canadians have been complaining for years, but the government has not listened to them. Now we have economists and tax specialists joining the debate and calling for a reduction of the huge tax burden. There is a fine article today in *The Globe and Mail* which makes reference to this.

We have to know what is this burden. The burden consists of federal income tax, payroll taxes, provincial taxes, municipal taxes, GST, PST, and the recent phenomenon of user fees, which I call hidden taxes.

Let me dwell on some real examples of what hard working Canadians are facing. Dan Ticcaugh, a constituent of mine, is a hard working father. He is raising two children. He earned \$17,000 last year to feed his family. He paid \$2,000 in taxes when he completed his income tax form. His refund came to \$97 and his wife's refund came to \$150.

• (1255)

He asked me a very simple question. How can the government justify taking taxes from a low income family? I asked the same question. How does the government expect a family of four to survive when such a large portion of their disposable income is taken away? It is no wonder we are hearing of rising child hunger and poverty among our fellow citizens.

I would like also to turn my attention to the plight of small businesses in our country. During the last month I have heard from the owners of three small businesses who have approached me about recent rulings by Revenue Canada. These small business owners put in long hours and try hard to put food on the table for their families. Let me say at the outset that they are also willing to pay their fair share of taxes and have been doing so for years. What is happening to them now?

These individuals run small trucking and cleaning firms. They work hard to get contracts and to sell their services to prospective clients. They also hire people to provide services on a subcontractual basis. It is a fine arrangement that helps both parties to put food on the table. It is not easy for them. They work long, hard hours. They make a small income, enough to provide the basics for their families.

Lo and behold, Revenue Canada enters the picture and says that this arrangement is not right. They say "Sorry, but you have to pay EI. We do not accept these people as being subcontractors". To make matters worse it is backdated. Suddenly a successful business is facing a crisis. It is threatened with bankruptcy, which will put people out of work and send them back to welfare.

They have said that this arrangement is the most economical and viable option they have to keep them employed and to put food on the table. They have been forced into this kind of arrangement because of high payroll taxes and taxes that keep going higher and higher.

Instead of helping these people, instead of letting them use their entrepreneurial skills to earn income for their families, the government is forcing them into the hands of creditors.

The government has a huge EI surplus because it has squeezed money out of hard-working Canadians. It is a surplus that has accumulated on the backs of workers and small business owners. Therefore I say to the Minister of Finance, please listen. Listen to what is happening to small businesses and to people.

It is ridiculous to tax people so much that they are forced to go to food banks and welfare. In the end it costs us more. To make matters worse, how do these people feel when they see that while the government is reducing their meagre incomes through taxes it is spending their tax dollars on projects like a tunnel for senators so they are able to go to their offices in comfort and avoid a two

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minute bus ride? What about the millennium project; spending \$140 million on what basically is a party?

Something needs to be done. The time has come for a real tax break, not just cosmetic changes. For years Canadians have been held accountable to pay taxes and they have complied. Now it is the government's turn to show accountability in the way it uses that hard earned tax money. Unfortunately this year's budget contains precious little for Canadians to smile about.

Let me quote what some economists and tax experts are saying. "Our taxes are snuffing out innovation, investment and entrepreneurial spirit". That is from Sherry Cooper, senior VP and chief economist of Nesbitt Burns. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce said "The government has chosen to spend far beyond what it had budgeted for just one year ago. Spending for 1998-99 will come in at a stunning \$7.6 billion higher. In 1999-2000 program spending has been set at \$111.2 billion, a \$4.2 billion increase over the \$107 billion projection in last year's budget".

• (1300)

It seems to me that we cannot get the Liberal government off our backs.

Jeff Rubin, chief economist with Wood Gundy, said "From a tax competitiveness standpoint, Canada ranks dead last in the G-7. While virtually every other G-7 economy lowered its personal income tax burden over the last 15 years, Canada's rose sharply, both as a percentage of GDP and of household income".

This year's federal budget does not address many issues. It does not address reducing our federal debt. The federal debt today sits at \$579.7 billion, which translates into \$18,800 per person. The interest payment on the debt is \$42.5 billion. It is the largest single government expenditure and translates into \$1,400 per person.

My colleague from Calgary—Nose Hill this morning said what she liked about the federal budget. I would like to dwell on the issues we do not think the government has addressed.

It was the usual pay more and receive less budget. The government continues to waste money. From \$107 billion it is going to \$111 billion. I do not understand why the government cannot get off our backs and allow Canadians to bring prosperity to the country.

There are examples. There is the Ontario government. The Alberta government has decided to uncouple its taxation system that is tied to the federal government. It is the first provincial government to do that. That trend will carry on because they do not see the federal government addressing what Canadians are looking for.

Personal income tax continues to make up the largest share of household spending. In 1997 an average of 21 cents of every dollar of household spending went toward personal income tax, as

opposed to 20 cents for shelter, 12 cents for transportation and 11 cents for food. These figures are from Statistics Canada.

The top federal marginal tax rate is reached at less than \$60,000 in Canada. In the United States the top rate kicks in at over \$200,000. No wonder many of our brightest and best are moving south of the border.

After tax family incomes declined by over 5% in real terms from 1989 to 1996. Personal savings per taxpayer have fallen to an all-time low. Canadian families continue to work harder and harder and find they have less at the end of the month.

The government continues to ignore the critical issue of lowering the debt rapidly. The costs of social programs will rise dramatically early in the 21st century. We will not have the financial means to handle the increase because of the massive debt hanging over us.

• (1305)

Where has this budget failed on social programs? People work harder and pay more income tax. Canadians have heard about tax relief from this minister in past budgets but have seen little happen. Most will find that the basic personal amount remains at \$6,456, a pitifully low amount as a basic deduction. Two years from now when we do our taxes for 2000 we will see that the basic deduction has increased by \$675 to \$7,131. That is probably because it will be election time and the Liberals are starting to hand out small goodies off the table.

Because the basic deduction is not indexed, its value decreases each year by the rate of inflation. Let us assume an inflation rate of 1.5% per year for a total of 3% over the next two years. The value of our deduction declines by \$214 and our tax breaks by \$36. Suddenly our \$115 tax break is worth only \$79. Already almost one-third of our promised tax break will have been lost. What have we gained? The government talks about tax relief but grabs it back through deindexing or stealth taxes.

The government has promised that over 200,000 low income Canadians will be removed from the tax rolls this year. Can we trust that promise? As it stands right now, unemployment insurance premiums are too high and with benefits declining, this gives a surplus which basically belongs to Canadian workers and business people. To make matters worse, the finance minister wanted to use this fund to balance the budget.

The government's budget has been totally silent on homelessness. It is a growing problem which the federal government should look at and decide what measures it should take.

What do we have in this budget that is going to take us into the next century? Unfortunately Canadians have nothing to smile about.

The productivity gap is growing. The government's own minister talked about it. As a matter of fact the ministers are fighting over the issue. The standard of living for Canadians is lagging

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further and further behind the U.S. and other countries. The brain drain continues with an increase in loss of international competitiveness. The government has reduced opportunities for many.

I have indicated in my examples what Canadians are facing and what this government has failed to address. I hope the government will listen to what Canadians and economists are saying.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with some interest to what the member had to say.

One of the major budgetary items of the government in recent years has been the child tax benefit. This is an allocation of upwards of \$2 billion to the children of the poorest families in Canada. In my riding poor families looked forward to this with great anticipation. Here at last was a substantial allocation per child to the income of the poorest families in the land.

The federal government has to make particular arrangements with each province when it is flowing money of this type. Even though I suspect the vast majority of people in Canada support the idea of combating child poverty, the arrangements were different in every province.

In my own riding there was great disappointment when it was discovered that because of the arrangement we had to make with the Government of Ontario, the province took away from those low income families which were on social assistance the amount the federal government had added to their incomes. As a result there was no change in their income.

• (1310)

It is true that because of the agreement the federal government made, the moneys the provincial government took away were flowed to programs for low income working families. Nevertheless, there was no change in the income of the impoverished families and children. In Ontario more than 40% of the people on social assistance are children.

The member represents a riding in Alberta. Would he explain to the House what the Government of Alberta's policy was and what his position was with respect to the flowing of the money to low income children through the child tax benefit which this government introduced?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to answer the hon. member's question.

I will dwell on the first point, the child tax benefit. It is amazing that he says the federal government is giving child tax benefits. I tell him it is not in this budget. The government's child tax relief is going to come in 2000 and 2001. Why not now? The member

talked about his constituency and what it was looking for. That did not address the issue. It moved it back.

The member in his second question talked about Alberta. I mentioned in my speech that the new tax the Alberta government came up with is uncoupled from the federal government. Why did it decide to uncouple in the year 2000? Alberta is the first province to do it. Other provinces will follow because they do not agree with what the federal government is doing in giving tax relief. Alberta has decided to uncouple from the Liberal government so it can give tax relief to its citizens. That was one of the best things the Government of Alberta did. It has come up with one of the most innovative ideas in this country, a single flat tax rate. This government could learn from Alberta.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, to echo the words of my colleague from Calgary, the Liberal government since 1993 has stood in the House and told us how important the child care tax credit is to it and how it places this as a high priority. The finance minister stands up and crows about his so-called balanced budget and the surplus and the very people the Liberal government has supposedly placed such a priority on, the children of this country who are living in homes where money is of greatest need, yet there is not one red cent in a child tax credit. That could almost be called somewhat hypocritical. The government says it is a high priority yet it fails to act.

I wanted to make that comment so that the member opposite is clear on what his finance minister has done. Perhaps he did not know that it was not in the budget. It is very important and the finance minister, despite his balanced budget and the so-called surplus, has failed to address it.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing that point up.

Again I would like to take this opportunity to advise my colleagues on the other side of the House to look at what the Government of Alberta has come up with, to listen to the voices of Canadians and get off our backs with high taxes. I have given members examples in my speech. They should look at those examples. They are real Canadians who are suffering. The government is sending them into bankruptcy. They must be allowed to work and put food on the table. The government must get off the backs of Canadians.

• (1315)

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member opposite was commenting on the child tax credit, which is a positive initiative and heads in the right direction.

However, if he really wanted to ensure that we actually have fairer taxes, he should read the initiative that we proposed in Winnipeg in 1996 as part of our policy document. The Reform Party dedicated an opposition day in the House with respect to

ensuring that we have fairer tax treatment for families with one parent who chooses to work in the home and one parent who actually—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I must interrupt the member. The intent of my recognizing you was to ask a question to the member for Calgary East.

**Mr. John Herron:** In lieu of the comments I just made, would the hon. Reform Party member concur that if we want to ensure that all children are treated equally we should tax families that have one parent working inside the home and one parent working outside the home in the same way as we do dual income parents?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his very important question. I agree with him. Only four days ago there was a headline in the *Calgary Herald* that 6,000 children in Calgary face hunger.

The member is absolutely right when he says the government has failed to address the fundamental issue that is facing Canadian society, which is to give tax breaks to parents who like to stay at home. This has totally been ignored. When Beverly Smith met the minister, the impression she got was that the government was not interested in stay at home parents.

I concur with the hon. member that this is an absolutely important issue. I thank him for bringing it up. We know that the government has yet to do something about that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this is an important moment in parliament when we debate the budget, and we cannot debate the budget without discussing the government.

When the Prime Minister shuffled the cards and selected cabinet, he said “I need a cabinet with a lot of jacks, not too many queens and definitely a lot of jokers”. This is essentially the distribution that has inspired the government in implementing its policies.

This budget is disappointing, for two reasons. First, the government failed to deal with the right priorities. What would they have been? The fight against poverty, naturally. There have never been so many poor in Canada. A look at the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s or the 1990s reveals that there are more poor people now than ever before. What is the government doing about this problem? Nothing.

The people in the Bloc Québécois are very committed to the fight against poverty. There is myself, naturally, but there is also the member for Québec and my colleague from Rivière-du-Loup, who has led and continues to lead a fight for an independent employment insurance fund. The government must realize that the

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poverty we are talking about is the poverty created by government measures, and we will come back to this.

● (1320)

The other disappointment we had with this budget is that it confirmed and perpetuated the hallmark of Canadian federalism—government intervention in provincial jurisdictions.

Historians will understand, on analyzing the years 1994 to 2002, that this government was one of those that had the least respect for provincial jurisdictions. It was one of the most interfering governments.

I see the Liberals smiling. As they say, the fool laughs and the sage smiles. There is no lack of smiles on the other side of the House. This is a bit disconcerting, because they did not react to federal government interference in the health field.

If one asked any of the government party members, whether from Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia or Saskatchewan, to point out the place where the constitution, which is supposed to strike a balance between the power of the provinces and of the federal government, states that the federal government is allowed to get involved in the health field, I am willing to bet that no one over there could find such a thing, because it is not there.

They just waded in to do their dirty work, with no hesitation whatsoever. I will give some examples of this. There is the creation of the Canadian institute of health research, an expenditure of \$65 million by the year 2001 and another \$175 million in 2001-2002. The federal government wants to get into the health research and development field.

Would it not have been more respectful of the provinces' powers to say “We are going to transfer the available funding?”. There is no denying that the federal government has plenty of money at this time. Of course, these funds can be considered ill gotten gains, because the government passed its deficit on to the provinces.

At present, the federal government has a lot of money. If it had wanted to put it to good use, it could easily have transferred to the provinces funds that would have enabled them to fund research in the health sector, because we all agree that it is important to do research in that area.

Our population is aging, and seniors are living longer. We all have a pretty good chance of living until the age of 85, 90 or 95. I do not want to exaggerate, but the fact is that people are living longer.

Another example of federal intrusion is the research and evaluation fund for nursing staff. The government will spend \$25 million on this over a 10 year period. Then there is the Canadian institute of health research, which will get \$328 million to improve health information systems by applying modern technology. In short, the

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government's attitude is brazen, impolite, disrespectful and shocking, and all those who have some backbone in this House should be outraged. Of course, this excludes a good half of the membership here.

Be that as it may, if the government had wanted to do something useful, it could easily have accepted a number of the Quebec government's legitimate demands. This is a democratically elected government, one of the best we have had in a long time in the National Assembly.

I will give the example of the Montreal convention centre. Montreal is an international city, and a hub for the tourist industry. Montreal, and Quebec City of course—and I see my colleague from the Quebec City region nodding in approval—are both very important tourist destinations.

• (1325)

The Government of Quebec is going ahead and enlarging the Montreal congress centre, because it realizes that additional space is required for a number of important congresses that are planned years in advance. Reservations have already been taken for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. Organizers of a congress—not a simple convention, but an international congress—must obviously begin their preparations a few years in advance.

In the past, the federal government has always contributed one third of the money required to expand congress centres, whether in Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, London or Ottawa. Ottawa gives every impression of being a patronage, with the Minister of Industry giving Ottawa's congress centre priority over Montreal's.

The Government of Quebec decided to go ahead and expand the Montreal congress centre on its own. Now we must pay for this expansion. The Government of Canada owes Quebec exactly \$58 billion. We would appreciate payment in the next few weeks.

Here is an area where the government had some leeway, but did nothing. When it comes to Quebec's interests, there will always be people on the government side ready to steamroller over them. If the Bloc Québécois were not here in Ottawa, who would represent Quebec's interests? Certainly not the Liberal members from Quebec, who epitomize the "silence of the lambs".

Like all his colleagues from Ontario, the member from Ontario is very vocal, but only when it comes to defending his province's interests, and certainly not those of Quebec. I could give many other examples, such as the harmonization of the QST and the GST, where the Government of Quebec, which was the first province to harmonize, lost out. We are still waiting for our \$1 billion. The same goes for the ice storm; the federal government owes us \$435 million.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member—

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, I had 20 minutes, not 10.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I was given to understand the hon. member would be sharing his time. Continue.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** The House will be pleased to know that it is 20 minutes, Madam Speaker. I would take a round of applause by the government members as a sign of encouragement. We all need a little encouragement in this House.

The budget provided the federal government with a golden opportunity to settle its debt with the Government of Quebec, but it chose not to do so.

During the ice storm, the people in Quebec came together in a show of solidarity and everyone gave a helping hand. Although in a tight situation, the Government of Quebec agreed to loosen the purse strings. There are overdue payments with regard to the ice storm: Quebecers are being denied \$435 million, because the federal government argues that the expenditures incurred by Hydro-Québec to undertake emergency measures and rebuild its infrastructure are not covered by the federal disaster relief program.

When will the Liberals play fair with the Quebec government? That is the question.

We could talk about Oka. The Government of Quebec is still waiting for a \$38 million cheque to cover expenditures the province considers eligible under the federal disaster relief program.

• (1330)

We are dealing with a petty government, a low, mean, and heartless government, except maybe for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development who stands out a bit, though not enough to deserve an award.

There is also the whole issue of systemic inequities that have continued for several generations now. Let us start with research and development. Is there anything more important in a modern society that R&D?

I am glad to see that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is showing some concern. I have some consideration for the minister of course because she is a charming lady, but also because she had the courage to apologize, on behalf of the Government of Canada, and that she is working now on a plan of reconciliation with the aboriginal people.

I hope the minister will not forget that, if there ever was a government on this earth that has worked, that has recognized aboriginal governments, and that has paid tribute to, made things easier for and given space to aboriginal communities, to the first

nations, because they are nations, it is the Government of Quebec that did it, as early as 1985.

In a sovereign Quebec, within a matter of months, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development knows that we will treat all the aboriginal communities on Quebec territory on an equal footing. The Erasmus commission urged the government to do the same. I hope that this call will be heard, but I still think that the minister stands apart from the rest of the government, which is quite unimpressive. She is like a breath of fresh air in an all too dreary situation.

I also want to raise the whole issue of social housing. Eighty-nine per cent of my constituents are tenants, not owner-occupants. In the 1996 speech from the throne, the government had committed to decentralizing certain powers. Among the commitments that the government had made at that time, \$1.9 billion was to be redistributed to the provinces for social housing. What has happened since that speech from the throne? Nothing happened in the case of the Government of Quebec.

Nothing happened. Why? It is not because the Quebec government was not ready to negotiate or refused to take over that responsibility. Since Quebec is already responsible for the Civil Code and for land use management, it would only be normal for it to also take over responsibility for social housing.

You will not believe what I am about to say. The Government of Canada does not want to give Quebec its fair share of the social housing budget. Despite the fact that Quebec has 29% of all Canadians who are in dire need of housing, the Canadian government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, invests only 17% of its available funds in Quebec. Whether we look at the percentage of the total Canadian population Quebecers represent or at the percentage of Canadians in need of housing living in Quebec, Quebec is clearly being short-changed.

The federal government wants to transfer \$300 million, which is ridiculous, when Quebec can rightfully claim more than \$500 million. Who is protecting Quebec's interests in this government? Who is interested in these much needed negotiations? No one.

• (1335)

I ask the minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to initiate negotiations, to negotiate in good faith and to give Quebec its due share.

I could give many more examples, but I want to take a few minutes to say that tomorrow will be a sad day in the House of Commons. I want to prepare you in advance because I know how sensitive you are.

I would like to address my comments to all Liberal members. Tomorrow there will be an important vote on a motion to add social

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condition as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. In fact, this is a private member's bill introduced by the hon. member for Shefford, whom we wish to commend. Government members could seize this opportunity to create an additional tool to fight poverty.

Quebec, which is without any doubt the most progressive province in Canada, added to its Charter of rights in 1975 a provision prohibiting discrimination based on social condition. The Canadian Human Rights Act still lacks a similar provision.

This explains why some Canadians are still victims of discrimination in terms of access to financial services, housing and, indeed, under the employment insurance legislation. Our bet is that taking action to put an end to discrimination, by adding social condition to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination for instance, would contribute in a significant and realistic way to improve the condition of the less fortunate.

I am ready to bet that, tomorrow, all government members will rise and vote against the bill introduced by the member for Shefford. Canadian citizens will not forget that this government was not concerned about poverty and would not take concrete action to fight poverty.

I would ask the government members who will sleep tonight to think about the benefit that would accrue to their communities if they agreed to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act. I remind them that eight provinces have already prohibited discrimination based on social condition. It is high time we, as parliamentarians, enabled those who are discriminated against, at least those who do in federal jurisdictions, to put an end to it.

If government members were to vote against the bill, I predict that a standoff, an all out war would result, because we in the Bloc Québécois will never tolerate so much insensitivity on their part with respect to the fight against poverty.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased the member included in his remarks comments with regard to poverty in Canada. I think all members will agree that the best way to approach a problem is first to understand it.

The member will know of some current research, for instance the research study of the Golden task force on the homelessness situation. It identified that 35% of the homeless in Toronto were mentally ill, which I expect is reflective of other urban communities across the country; 28% were youth who had been alienated from their families, and of those 70% had experienced physical or sexual abuse; 10% were abused women; and 18% were aboriginals off reserve. That accounts for a very significant proportion, over 80% of the homeless in Toronto.

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The member well knows this is a symptom of poverty but is not the sole cause. The social housing issue the member raises certainly is important. He will also know that one parent families, which account for about 12% of all families in Canada, also account for over 50% of all children living in poverty.

• (1340)

There is not a simple solution to poverty and homelessness in Canada. There is certainly an economic poverty that has to be addressed. We have to be vigilant on that. I think the member would agree, and I would be interested in his comments, that there is a social poverty in Canada that also has to be addressed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, I agree with a number of the comments made by our colleague.

I would, however, invite him to understand that, when it comes to analyzing the phenomenon of poverty, it must be realized that there is a kind of fault line that dates back to the early 1990s.

A link must be made to poverty—and the hon. member is right to point out that this is a phenomenon in the major cities for the most part—and particularly the poverty created by certain measures. If the hon. member wants to raise this issue, he might make an extremely useful contribution to the debate, first of all by asking his government to amend not only the Canadian Human Rights Act, but the Employment Insurance Act as well.

The hon. member must be aware that, because of his government's employment insurance legislation, 200,000 people across Canada have had to make use of last resort solutions. This might be termed social poverty, the last resort solutions provided by income security programs, because his government has raised the qualification criteria so high for those who pay into the employment insurance program, that they end up on social security, and this keeps them poor.

There are, of course, many causes of poverty. There is the matter of housing, the matter of outdated skills. People who have been skilled workers in the clothing, the textile or the petrochemical industries, which have been in decline internationally since the early 1980s and the 1990s, find themselves out of the workforce, and it is hard to get back in.

I would remind our colleague that it was his government that abolished the older workers adjustment program, known as POWA. I invite him therefore to give some more thought to the poverty created by governments, the one he belongs to in particular.

[English]

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Madam Speaker, I have a couple of brief comments with respect to my hon. col-

league's remarks. He spoke to the issue of Bill S-11 which was introduced by the member for Shefford and sponsored originally by Senator Cohen in the Senate.

Establishing social condition in the Canadian bill of human rights was something a number of provinces across the country have done. Given that the Minister of Justice just the other week made comments indicating that social condition should at least be considered or studied to be added to the charter of human rights, would the member not think that by not supporting Bill S-11 on this occasion and perhaps doing it down the road is an indication that the government prefers a bit of partisanship as opposed to doing the right thing and voting for Bill S-11 right away?

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, our colleague is right to remind us that there are times in parliament when we must rise above partisanship.

One of those very important times is, of course, when we talk about human rights. Had it been a government bill, I believe we would still have supported it unconditionally.

What is social condition? The way the courts have defined social condition refers to three elements: one's position in society based on one's income; one's position in society based on one's education; and the prejudice one suffers as a result of those positions.

• (1345)

Based on the rulings handed down by the courts, it is clear that welfare recipients have a particular social condition. In some cases, these court rulings have condemned discrimination against the poor because welfare recipients very often, if not almost always, live below the poverty line.

It must be noted that the debate on social condition is not an academic debate. It has a very concrete meaning for those people who would be able to challenge not only a number of discriminatory practices related to the services they receive, but also discriminatory measures taken by governments as the case may be.

Again, I urge all members—and I am sure my colleague, the member for Shefford, would do the same if she were here today—to vote tomorrow in favour of this bill that would improve the Canadian Human Rights Act and that would send a clear message to all Canadians that we do not accept discrimination, no matter which forms it takes.

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we can always count on the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for a lively speech. Unfortunately, we heard nothing new, just the usual sovereignist claims.



*Government Orders*

He cited all sorts of information and figures in his speech, but I heard no mention of the figures in this budget for the equalization payments. I wonder whether the member could speak to us about that a bit.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Madam Speaker, I would not like the member to pop his last remaining neuron, so I will speak very quietly. I cannot quite agree that there is nothing new.

I think he will understand that the issue is not whether it is new or old. It is about telling the truth. I think our colleague will agree that each of the matters we have raised is based on an enlightened understanding of the interests of Quebec.

The member may find it old hat to talk about poverty. I hope, like him, that a day will come when we do not have to debate it in the House because it will have been eliminated. However, to get to that point, there will need to be a lot more courage and lucidity in his caucus and a good dollop of co-operation among the opposition parties. The member is right. We are not there, even in our boldest fantasies about the Government of Canada.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, we have been listening to the Liberal spin on the budget since February. The fact is there are two stories. There is the story the Liberals would like Canadians to believe. Their spin doctors are trying to convince Canadians that they should feel good about the February budget. And there is the real story, and the facts that back up the real story. I will go through a few of the spin stories of the Liberals and then the other story and the facts.

The Liberals claim they are giving Canadians \$1.5 billion in tax relief this year, \$2.8 billion next year and \$3.4 billion by 2001-02 for a total of about \$7.7 billion. That is their story. The fact is that Canadians today are paying \$2,000 more in taxes than they did in 1993. The average Canadian is paying \$2,020 more in taxes than he or she did in 1993.

At the same time Canadians are getting less health care. Since coming to power, the Liberals have cut \$1,500 per taxpayer out of health care transfers, \$1,500 out of health care transfers for every single Canadian. Since the Liberals took power, federal taxes per taxpayer are up by 24%. That is the \$2,000.

• (1350)

**An hon member:** His nose is growing.

**Mr. Richard M. Harris:** The truth hurts. I can hear them squealing over there. The truth really hurts.

According to the latest figures, personal savings per taxpayer are down by \$3,700 since 1993. That is a 99% decrease in personal

savings for Canadians because of the Liberal government and its tax crazy finance minister.

According to the latest figures, take home pay has dropped \$2,100 for every taxpayer. Since 1993 disposable household income for hardworking Canadian families has dropped by over \$4,200.

That is what this Liberal government wants Canadians to feel good about.

In the Liberal spin story on health care the Liberals claim they will invest \$1.4 billion over three years for federal health care initiatives. They claim they will invest \$11.5 billion over the next five years in payments to the provinces in CHST transfers. That is the Liberal story.

Here is the real story. The Liberals have cut \$21.4 billion out of health and social spending since 1993. They have cut \$21.4 billion and they are going to give back \$11.5 billion over the next five years. There has been a 31% drop in taxpayer health and social spending by the federal government. The Liberals have cut health and social spending by 34% per taxpayer since 1993.

Here is another one the Liberals will not tell us about. There is 188,000 Canadians on waiting lists for serious operations and health care services. Waiting times for Canadians to see a health specialist are up 38% since 1993. Waiting times from a GP referral to a specialist to treatment are up 28%. Should I mention the hep C victims, those the Liberal government simply excluded at the stroke of a pen?

Is this the real story? Yes, it is. It is not the story the Liberal spin doctors would like Canadians to believe.

Liberals claim they expect to retire \$20 billion in market debt this year. That is the Liberal story. Here are the facts. This country's net debt is still a staggering \$580 billion, or \$18,800 for every single Canadian. Every time a baby is born in this country, he or she automatically owes \$18,800.

Why have we seen our health care cut? Why have we seen these high taxes? Because the previous Liberal governments since 1965 or so and the short term Tory government of Brian Mulroney have run up such a debt to the extent that every single year the government has to pay out \$42.5 billion in interest payments on that debt.

What could we do with that kind of money, \$42.5 billion? We could probably fund the entire health care system for about three years. We could probably pay the tuition fees for every student in post-secondary education in Canada today for their entire education period.

The spin doctors and the Liberals have been busy, but Canadians simply are not buying that story.

*S. O. 31*

Here is another one. Using their 1998-99 base of spending of \$104.5 billion, the Liberals say they will increase spending by \$7.6 billion this year alone. Sorry, the Liberals did not tell Canadians that. I would like to tell them once again. The Liberals will increase spending by \$7.6 billion.

• (1355)

This is the government that said it was important to get spending under control. Every year since 1993 the government has increased spending and over the last year by over \$7.5 billion in increased spending, or \$23 billion over the next three years.

This is a government that told Canadians it was crucial to get spending under control, yet it has increased spending. At the same time it has increased taxes since 1993. We know the tax increases this government has brought in, over \$2,000 per working Canadian since 1993.

Let me say those numbers again. Disposable income for the average Canadian family household has dropped over \$4,400 since 1993. That is because of the Liberal government's fiscal policies which simply do not work.

We cannot get our financial house in order unless we stop spending the money, and spending the money in some very foolish ways I might add. Instead of spending it on health care, the Liberals are content to spend a couple of billion dollars on a millennium monument to the prime minister. I could go on. The member for St. Albert who does the waste report knows all about Liberal spending.

Let us look at this one. The Liberals claim they are investing \$1.8 billion in research and development over the next four years. The fact is we want our brightest and our best to stay in this country. The best thing they can do for research and development is to give Canadians tax breaks so the brightest and the best do not go south of the line where they have a much more enjoyable tax regime.

The Liberals claim they are investing \$400 million to address compensation and benefits issues in the Department of National Defence. They are going to spend \$400 million. Here is the real story. Since 1993, the Liberals have cut \$7 billion out of funding for our armed forces. They have continuously been asking our troops to do more with less. They are going to give them back \$400 million, but they have taken away \$7 billion since 1993.

This budget is not what the Liberals would like Canadians to believe it is.

**The Speaker:** The member has time left. I understand there will be questions and comments. He will have the floor when we resume debate, but right now we will go to Statements by Members.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[*Translation*]

**THE LATE SENATOR PAUL DAVID**

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that we learned, on April 5, that senator Paul David, who founded the Montreal Heart Institute in the fifties, had passed away.

Dr. David was a world renowned cardiologist, who was also firmly committed to social action. He was the founder of the heart and stroke foundations of Canada and Quebec, of which he was also a president.

Dr. David received an impressive number of honours and awards throughout his brilliant career, both here and abroad.

A true pioneer in his field, he was only 35 when he founded, in 1954, in Montreal's east end, the famous heart institute that he ran in various capacities until his retirement, in 1984. It was under his direction that the first heart transplant ever performed in Canada was carried out at the institute, in 1968.

We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Dr. Yvette Lemire, and his children, François, Pierre, Charles-Philippe, Thérèse, Anne-Marie and Hélène.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the humanitarian situation in Kosovo is a catastrophe. Hundreds of thousands of people are being forced from their homes. Many are being slaughtered in the name of someone's perception of purity. Men, women and children are fleeing in every direction to escape the misery.

We as Canadians have a tradition of supporting human rights and the plight of refugees. We have opened our doors to them in the past and stand ready to do it again today.

The issue of military intervention in Kosovo affects my riding. St. Albert is home to many of the several thousand troops who are stationed in the Edmonton garrison. We know that if the soldiers are called upon, they will serve with pride and honour. They are trained, they are prepared, they are ready to serve.

Our hearts go out to our service men and women and their families who are preparing in case they may be separated to force a peace on warring factions in a faraway land. I want them to know that the thoughts and prayers of Canadians are with them at this most stressful time.

*S. O. 31*

• (1400)

**OC TRANSP***[Translation]***THE LATE OMER DESLAURIERS**

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Timmins—James Bay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Ontario Francophonie lost one of its greatest champions.

Omer Deslauriers, the former president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, former president of the Regroupement des intervenants professionnels franco-ontariens de la santé et des services sociaux, and the first president of the Council for Franco-Ontarian Affairs, worked tirelessly throughout his career to promote the cause of French Ontario.

Through his passion and perseverance, Omer Deslauriers, who became a Member of the Order of Canada in 1996 and was named Person of the year by the Richelieu International club in 1997, helped Franco-Ontarians play a more prominent role at the provincial level, particularly in the areas of education and health.

French Ontario has lost a remarkable spokesperson. It goes without saying that he will be missed.

I want to extend my most sincere condolences to his family.

\* \* \*

*[English]***OC TRANSP**

**Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I want to convey our heartfelt sympathies to the families, friends and colleagues of the victims of Tuesday's horrible outburst of violence in Ottawa.

Canadians have been shocked and numbed by this awful event. Our sadness and grief, in particular the sadness and grief of the victims' loved ones, are made more acute and painful by the senselessness of it all. It defies human understanding and explanation.

To the families and friends of Clare Davidson, Brian Guay, Dave Lemay and Harry Schoenmakers, I want to say we in this House share your sorrow and pain. One brief eruption of madness has caused your lives to be changed forever. If it is any consolation, your community is with you and is ready to help in whatever way it can.

I also want to commend the bus drivers and the other employees of OC Transpo who are endeavouring under very trying circumstances to deliver a service to the residents of Ottawa-Carleton. They are demonstrating tremendous courage and selflessness.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the tribute just read, the deaths of those five OC Transpo employees last week were senseless and heartbreaking.

Four innocent citizens of this community were killed by a lone gunman, leaving behind families, friends and co-workers who face the near impossible task of moving forward without them. To those closest to Harry Schoenmakers, Dave Lemay, Clare Davidson and Brian Guay, we offer our sincere and heartfelt support during this difficult healing process.

Pierre Lebrun, the gunman, took his own life that day and leaves behind a grieving mother. For the Lebrun family, the burden of this tragic event rests heavily and we must offer our support to them as well.

No law or social system could have predicted or prevented what took place and there are no guarantees that such an incident will not occur again.

However, we can be certain of one thing. If every day we do the right thing by the people with whom we live and work and are positive and supportive individuals then we will have done what we can to avert another tragedy such as this.

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*[Translation]***THE LATE JACQUES GIRARD**

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were saddened to hear of the death of Quebec's chief electoral officer, Jacques Girard, at the age of 41, following a long illness.

Mr. Girard succeeded Pierre-F. Côté as director general and chairman of the Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec. He was a talented individual known for his conscientious and rigorous performance of his duties, whether in the legal services of Quebec's chief electoral officer, or in Quebec's Department of Revenue.

Mr. Girard was devoted to the democratic process. He knew that our electoral process guarantees the legitimacy of our political system and he ensured the full integrity of that process. In person, and through his position, he therefore epitomized the most noble instincts of every Quebecker and Canadian.

We extend our deepest condolences to the members of his family.

*S. O. 31*

[English]

### GRAND RIVER

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the fifth anniversary that the Grand River was named a Canadian heritage river.

Community efforts under the guidance of the Grand River Conservation Authority have improved the health of the Grand River watershed, increased heritage awareness and fostered a greater understanding of ecotourism.

The GRCA provides technical assistance to landowners, community groups, schools and municipalities through workshops, volunteer events, information products and logistics.

Since 1990 visits to the Grand River have increased 30% with 1.1 million visitors in 1998 alone. This has led to new jobs and economic benefits to communities all along the Grand River, including my riding of Cambridge.

I congratulate the GRCA on its ongoing success.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

### KOSOVO

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, very few people want war and most would avoid it at almost any cost.

In the case of Kosovo, most Canadians agree that our involvement with NATO is a better option than allowing killing and persecution of Kosovar Albanians to continue and accelerate.

Most of us take our position more as observers than as participants, but the men and women of the Canadian forces are involved in a very direct and real way. As of yesterday we have close to 200 pilots and support personnel from 4 Wing, Cold Lake, which is in my riding, serving out of Italy. This means that families are separated for long periods of time, leaving spouses and children of pilots and ground crew wondering if their husbands, fathers, wives and mothers will return safely.

At the same time as we take pride that our personnel are among the world's best, we are also very concerned for their safety. I know that my heart and my prayers are with our members and their families as they serve this noble cause.

I have a special message to the personnel serving out of Cold Lake: "serve well and come home safely".

### WESTERN PROVINCES

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the House that the Prime Minister's task force on the four western provinces, which I chair, spent the Easter break meeting and consulting with Manitobans.

The response to this initiative was overwhelming. Over three days, task force members met with over 60 individuals and organizations across the province. Manitobans spoke to us about issues as diverse as the plight of our aboriginal peoples, the need for another infrastructure program, immigration issues and social programs.

This initiative was announced to complement the work of our western caucus and give western Canadians another opportunity to shape the national agenda as the government nears the middle of our second mandate.

The response we had throughout Manitoba proves one thing, western Canadians welcome opportunities to have input into the government's decision making process. I look forward to our future visits to Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C.

On behalf of the task force members, I would like to thank all those Manitobans who took the time to come and speak to us.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NOUVELLE SCÈNE

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after ten years of hard work and a lengthy fundraising campaign, a great dream has been realized today.

Today, a theatre for Ottawa's French speaking community is opening up on King Edward Avenue. The Nouvelle Scène will now house, under one roof, the Théâtre du Trillium, the Compagnie Vox Théâtre, the Théâtre de la Vieille 17, and the Théâtre de la Catapulte.

The Nouvelle Scène will also host francophone theatre companies from the region, Canada and French speaking countries throughout the world.

I wish the Nouvelle Scène every success and I urge my colleagues to pay it a visit and enjoy some great theatre. Break a leg, as they say.

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### THE LATE JACQUES GIRARD

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec and Canada lost a great shaper of democracy.

On April 10, at the early age of 41, Jacques Girard, the directeur général des élections du Québec and head of the Commission de la représentation électorale, died of cancer.

Appointed to these duties by the National Assembly last July 13, Mr. Girard earned the respect and admiration of all the members of his team, and all political parties, with the high degree of competency and enthusiasm he put into this work, and his big heart.

Not only was Jacques Girard appreciated in Quebec, of course, but he was also greatly appreciated in Canada, where he occupied the position of Director of Legal Services at Elections Canada from 1992 to 1998. He also made a name abroad with his participation in technical assistance and observation missions in elections in many countries such as Russia, Haiti and Mexico.

I have warm memories of this likeable, warm, competent, always approachable man, with whom I had the pleasure and privilege of working. May I extend my sincere condolences to Mr. Girard's family and friends on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

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[English]

#### YUGOSLAVIA

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we will have what is called a take note debate in the House of Commons about what is happening in Yugoslavia.

The details of the procedure have yet to be finalized, but what is absolutely clear is that many Canadians feel that parliament has not adequately dealt with this issue, that somehow our way of dealing with such issues is not commensurate with their importance.

Indeed, when we think of the fact that we have votes on all kinds of less important things in this place and debate matters longer, it is clear that such take note debates on general motions with no votes do not create a parliamentary mandate. Instead they run the risk of being treated like a blank cheque and being held up as parliamentary approval for future actions when no such thing took place.

This government's record on meaningfully consulting the House of Commons when it comes to NATO matters is not a good one. For example, we were the only NATO country whose parliament did not formally debate the expansion of NATO.

• (1410)

The NDP calls on the government to be open to more meaningful debate and urges that at the very least the Minister of Foreign Affairs make a ministerial statement in the House tomorrow after he comes back from Brussels.

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[Translation]

#### MONTFORT HOSPITAL

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in this Année canadienne de la francophonie, Gisèle Lalonde and SOS Montfort are in court today to achieve recognition of the rights of Ontario francophones to their health institutions, and to the maintenance of the only francophone hospital west of the Ottawa River.

The Bloc Québécois has been pleased to provide its support to the efforts of Ontario francophones on behalf of the survival of this health care facility, which is also a French language teaching hospital.

It is unacceptable that francophones in the rest of Canada must go to court in order to gain recognition of their most essential rights, to receive an education and health care in their language, at a time when the French speaking community in Canada is more fragile than ever, as the latest census data prove.

The Bloc Québécois wishes to assure Gisèle Lalonde, the Montfort Hospital board, and the franco-Ontarian community, of Quebeckers' support in their efforts to gain respect for their fundamental rights.

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[English]

#### MEMBER FOR WHITBY—AJAX

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, fellow members of parliament, I am back.

I want to thank the hundreds of you who sent get well wishes to me in Germany during my 27 day stay at the Johanniter Krachenhospital in Bonn, and then upon my return to Canada in mid-February.

I am pleased to report that I am well on the way to a full recovery.

I return to parliament with a renewed appreciation for our health care system without which an episode such as I have recently experienced may well have bankrupt both me and my family.

I also want to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Moebius and his medical team, to the staff of the Canadian embassy in Bonn, and most particularly Ambassador Gaetan Lavertu and Dennis Lance who made daily visits to my bedside with news from home.

I want to send a very special thank you to the residents of Whitby—Ajax who kept both florists and card companies flourishing.

I also take this opportunity to publicly thank my staff here and in the riding for their tremendous efforts on behalf of my constituents during my time of illness.

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Welcome home, Judi.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL POST**

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, fine whine was the highlight of the commentary section in Saturday's *National Post*.

Readers were subjected to the same tired excuses from the Prime Minister as to why a convicted criminal and an admitted embezzler under investigation got \$2.3 million in federal grants and loans for hotel projects in his riding.

Pathetic protests from the Prime Minister do nothing to restore public confidence, especially when Liberal cabinet ministers and backbenchers do much to prevent Parliament from uncovering the truth.

Instead of writing a four page missive to the *National Post*, why will the Prime Minister not prove his integrity by tabling all documents in the possession of his office on his involvement in the Duhaime and Thibault projects? Better yet, why will he not invoke section 11 of the Auditor General Act to direct that office to conduct an independent audit of both deals? Anything less makes the Prime Minister's whine of integrity taste very sour.

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**TORONTO LODGE 1600**

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 19, I had the honour of attending the grand opening of Toronto Lodge No. 1600 of the Loyal Order of Moose. Toronto Lodge 1600 has been in existence for 84 years but this occasion marked the first time that the lodge has owned its own building.

During the evening's festivities, certificates were presented to those members of the community who helped make this grand opening possible. The following people and organizations were honoured for their contributions: Torbram Electric, Lawrence Cohen, Tom Campagnolo Construction, Trevor Gabb, Canada Cartage, Mike Mastrotucci, Al McWhirter, Larry Huard, Ken McCalla, Innovative Securities, Vera-Ann Kalbol and Dennis Packer of Unistar Communications.

Organizations such as the Toronto lodge have made community service a cornerstone of their every day life. They are hard at work giving their time and effort to make our community a better place to live by supporting both local and international charitable organizations and programs.

I offer my congratulations to all members of the Toronto Lodge No. 1600 of the Loyal Order of Moose. I welcome them to the riding of Parkdale—High Park.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[English]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country generally support Canada's involvement in the NATO campaign to stop Serb aggression in Kosovo. They want to see ethnic Albanians resettled to live in peace and democracy in Kosovo.

Today in Brussels, NATO foreign ministers are gathered to assess the best means of obtaining that peace. I wonder whether the Prime Minister would tell the House what message our foreign minister took to that meeting in Brussels on behalf of Canadians.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say thanks for the support that all the parties have given to activities of the Canadian Armed Forces in NATO.

This morning when the minister was in Brussels he took the message that has been the same since the beginning. We want to make sure that it is possible for the Kosovars to go home safely, that the ethnic cleansing Mr. Milosevic started more than a year ago is terminated as quickly as possible, and that we maintain the plan which was agreed to by all members of NATO some weeks ago.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen and other senior American officials called Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic a war criminal. The American president's chief of staff called for his removal from office as a necessary precondition of Serbia's regaining its status as a democratic nation.

Does the government support these statements? If so, how do we negotiate for peace with a leader who has been labelled a war criminal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the position of the Canadian government is that we want all criminals who have caused the genocide in Serbia and in the neighbouring nations to face the trial that is called by the international community. There was a resolution to that effect. This is one of the problems we are having with Milosevic and his government. They do not want to return the criminals to face justice and we insist that they do that.

In the meantime the government in Belgrade is run by Milosevic. That is the government which exists at this moment in that country. If it wants to sign a peace agreement, even if it is

*Oral Questions*

Milosevic, we should take it. If he is a war criminal he should face the consequences of his actions in the international court.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today in Brussels some officials conceded that most of the original Rambouillet peace framework had been overtaken by events and would not rule out partitioning Kosovo as part of any settlement.

Is the government considering supporting the partitioning of Kosovo as part of any negotiated settlement to resolve the crisis in the Balkans?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we want all Kosovars anywhere and everywhere to be able to go back home to Kosovo. They have been there a long time. There is no discussion at this time about partitioning Kosovo as part of the deal.

We want all Kosovars to be able to go back to their homes where they have been for a long time and to have their lives and freedom protected.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the majority of Canadians appear to possibly support the use of ground forces in Kosovo, but they want to be kept informed about just what the government is doing.

Last week the defence minister said that Canada was considering sending ground forces to Kosovo in advance of the peace agreement, but the Prime Minister denied that there were any such plans.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Is the government considering sending Canadian ground forces into Kosovo?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no discussion at this time at the ministerial level of any possibility of sending troops in a combat position into Kosovo. This is not something that is on the table and it is not being considered by the government.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly being considered by other governments in the NATO allies and it is certainly the topic of conversation in military circles. It is the number one concern of the military. It is the number one concern of the official opposition.

• (1420)

Again my question is for the Prime Minister. Is the government considering sending Canadian ground forces to Kosovo in advance of a peace agreement?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have replied to that question. We are not considering such a move at all at this moment.

Our goal is to make sure that the Kosovars can go back home under secure circumstances, and under all the conditions that we

are waiting to have an agreement on, to make sure they can go there under secure conditions. Of course it was provided for in Rambouillet that an international force be there so they can enjoy the freedom they deserve.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he is not planning to send ground troops to Kosovo.

However, in the present state of affairs, with the air strikes dragging on longer than expected, is it not completely reasonable to consider what will happen if ground troops become necessary?

Will the Prime Minister tell us whether his cabinet and chief of defence staff are considering sending ground troops, if warranted, or if this scenario is excluded a priori?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are acting in concert with other countries.

As I said earlier, there is no question at this time of sending ground troops to Kosovo. None at all. We do not need to make a decision about this as long as the problem does not arise.

Our plan is to continue with the bombing. We were not under any illusions. We knew that it would take some time to achieve the anticipated results. We must stick with this course of action.

I am in agreement with the stepped up bombing that began a few days ago.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the Prime Minister's response is to say that "there is no question at this time of sending ground troops", and I agree.

However, it is not on the eve of sending them that we will be called upon to evaluate whether or not troops are necessary. In my view, the Prime Minister is suggesting that such an evaluation is now under way.

I ask him, in this order: Will he agree not to send any ground troops to Kosovo until this parliament has debated the issue and given its approval for such a course of action?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is our third debate on the topic since October.

I can assure the hon. member that if, one day, we are obliged—I hope it never comes to that—to send ground troops, I will be happy to hold another debate in the House of Commons at that time.

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence said recently that it would be a few weeks, if not several months, before the Canadian army was ready to intervene in Kosovo.

*Oral Questions*

Since many people are seriously raising the issue of land operations, could the minister tell us about the army's readiness at this point to intervene in Kosovo?

[*English*]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, we have one plan. We have an air campaign. We believe that the air campaign will work. We believe that the conditions set down again today in Brussels by NATO need to be met and we will continue with that campaign.

Of course military planners always look at different possibilities, but there is one plan and one plan only that is being followed by NATO and being followed by Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister to listen carefully to my question. I have twice asked him questions, and he does not always give me a direct answer.

I would ask him to tell us this. Between his statement of last week that a number of weeks, if not months, of preparation were required, and his statement of today, what has taken place so that the Canadian army is now ready, or not, to intervene and to act on a NATO decision?

[*English*]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 17 the House discussed the matter of ground troops under a peace accord. On that basis I indicated at that time that between 600 and 800 Canadian forces troops would be made available for that purpose.

• (1425)

Those troops are in training now and will be available to participate in a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo once the conditions laid down by NATO are adhered to by the Yugoslav government.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been counting on military actions alone to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Because of the military focus, political solutions have been virtually ignored with 19 days of bombing but no real diplomatic leadership.

Will the government now agree to show the leadership Canadians expect and push for a United Nations led negotiated solution?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nothing would be more pleasant for the government than to have an agreement with the United Nations on this problem. Our ambassador in New York has been active. I think it is very important to involve the Russians in a solution as much as possible.

I have written to Mr. Yeltsin to that effect. The reality is that both Russia and China have a veto at the security council and we cannot move.

I was very pleased with the statement of Secretary General Kofi Annan yesterday when he confirmed that his personal position was the same as that of NATO as stated this morning on the condition to have a peaceful settlement in Kosovo.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is bombing Serbia with the objective of protecting the civilian population of Kosovo, but the ethnic cleansing continues.

Is Canada prepared to advance the proposition that if Milosevic will stop the atrocities, stop the killing and agree to come to the table, NATO will suspend the bombing?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the conditions mentioned in the five conditions agreed upon is to make sure he stops this cleansing and withdraws his soldiers so the Kosovars can go back home under secure conditions.

He does not want to do that. He started the policy of cleansing against the Kosovars months before we had the Rambouillet negotiations. Despite the agreement of the Russians on the Rambouillet conditions, he refused to sign and kept with his policy of pushing the Kosovars out and killing probably hundreds of thousands of them. That is why we have to maintain pressure on him with intensification of the air strikes.

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in 1991 when the international community under the UN flag was about to strike against Iraq, the then opposition leader and now Prime Minister who was personally briefed by the prime minister accused him of rolling the dice with Canadian lives during a real debate on a votable motion.

[*Translation*]

Is the Prime Minister prepared, in a real debate with a real vote, to put the question of Canada's and NATO's intervention in Kosovo?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the government House leader negotiated the form of today's debate, and all parties, including the Progressive Conservative Party, agreed to a debate like the one we will be having.

This is the practice we have followed since we first formed the government. Every time there have been Canadian military interventions somewhere, we have always come to the House of Commons before going further and we are continuing to do so. We have always had this sort of debate.

Today's debate was approved last week by the Progressive Conservative Party, as by the other parties. I think a serious debate is not the time for petty politics.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should check his facts. There will be no petty politics, but he should put real politics at the service of Canadians and the Kosovar people and have a real debate in parliament.

The Prime Minister is not up to date, but we turned down a debate like the other two debates. What parliament needs is to speak officially. What is going on in Kosovo is serious.

Might the Prime Minister be afraid to do this with parliament? Might he be afraid to tell parliamentarians and Canadians what is going on in Kosovo?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, far from being afraid, we organized briefings for all of the parties.

**Mr. André Bachand:** That is not true.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** I understand the confusion among the Conservatives. Their critic said he opposed interventions, and their leader outside the House, Mr. Clark, said he favoured them. They should resolve their problems and then come back to the House.

[English]

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that the government is not considering committing Canadian ground troops to NATO action in the Balkans. Should that position change, will the Prime Minister commit to submitting that issue to a vote—not a discussion, not a debate, but a vote—in this Chamber?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have developed a system that is working very well. We have consulted more departments. We have established this route. The member is asking the question “Should there be a vote if troops were to be sent to engage in combat?” That is the question. We are not there. When that question comes I will seriously consider the proposition of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a simple question that requires a yes or a no from the Prime Minister.

In 1991 when the Conservative government committed troops to the war in the gulf the Prime Minister was on his feet demanding that there be a vote in this House and saying it was illegal when they did not get the vote.

I ask the Prime Minister again: Will the government agree to a vote in this House before committing Canadian ground troops to any action in the Balkans?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a hypothetical question and I have replied as favourably as possible. We are not faced with that situation. I said, and I repeat,

that if we are faced with that situation I will consider it positively and I will give the answer when confronted with the problem.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, following the meeting of NATO’s foreign affairs ministers in Brussels this morning, the French and Belgian ministers of Foreign Affairs stated that the idea of creating some kind of international protectorate for Kosovo was discussed among allies.

Could the Prime Minister tell us whether Canada intends to promote this solution, or will it continue reacting to events as it has been doing since the beginning of this conflict?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the search for a solution to this problem, we are not ruling out any option.

At this time, the priority is to get an agreement, to allow Kosovars to return home. This is the top priority. Then, there is the issue of Kosovo’s political status. Kosovo enjoyed a high degree of autonomy until President Milosevic took it away in 1989. What will the political solution be? We are prepared to look at every option.

But the important thing is to ensure that Kosovars can safely go back home and live a normal life.

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister tell us whether he plans to finally take advantage of the fact that Canada sits at the UN security council by suggesting to the other members of the security council the creation of some kind of international protectorate for Kosovo?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our ambassador to the United Nations is very active on this issue. However, we are well aware that the Russians and the Chinese do not want to debate this issue at the security council. Therefore, it would not be very useful at this time to put forward a proposal that would go nowhere.

All the suggestions that will be made will be reviewed by the minister and by the ambassador, and they will be discussed when there is a chance for a positive solution at the security council, which is something we all hope for.

[English]

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, just a minute ago we heard the Prime Minister refuse to commit to sending this issue to a vote in the House of Commons. We are talking about sending the sons and daughters of Canadian citizens into a possible combat situation. I do not understand what the problem is. This is the most democratic Chamber in the country. Why is the Prime Minister refusing to allow this issue to be considered? Why is he refusing to commit today that we will have a vote on this issue when it actually comes into being? Why is the Prime Minister refusing?

*Oral Questions*

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I said there would be a debate if we faced that question. I said that at the beginning and there will be a debate.

At this time I want to debate what is going on today because the priority of the government is to make sure that we have a peaceful situation there and that we will not need to send combat troops there. That is the goal of the government.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that is well and good, but the fact is that any responsible government would look down the road. A responsible government would show somehow that it is committed to democracy.

When we are talking about an issue that is this serious, I submit that the Prime Minister has a responsibility to declare right now that he will put this issue to a vote. Will he make that commitment?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have replied very clearly that we are faced with a situation at this time that if we were to be in the position of having to send troops there, it is not something I wish, or any Canadian wishes, to have a debate.

We want at this time to make sure that the plan we have agreed to with the countries of NATO will work and that Milosevic will permit the people to go back to Kosovo and live in security. Of course if there is a peace agreement Canada will want to participate in a peacekeeping operation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, right at the beginning of his response to the first question, the Prime Minister stated that he was proud to have the support of all parties in this House. I think that, indeed, all parties support the government's actions, with a few reservations of course.

What we are quite simply asking him is this: in order to conserve this necessary support, can he commit today to holding a vote in this House, should we need to send troops to Kosovo, before a decision is taken?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, we are having a debate today to discuss the situation in Kosovo. That is where the crisis is at the present time, and we must ensure that the Kosovars can return home under the best possible conditions.

That is the debate we are having today. I can see the members of the opposition do not want to debate that. What they want to debate is a situation we do not wish to see occur. The last thing we want to have to do is send land forces over.

Canada wishes to have a peaceable position, one which will enable Canadians to take part in peacekeeping operations.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are not refusing to allow such a debate and we do take it seriously. However, history has shown us that there has been significant division in Canada in the past when such decisions had to be taken.

There is a greater unity than ever here on this question at this time, a first, on the question of Kosovo. Could the Prime Minister not commit to telling us in advance whether indeed he would hold a vote to avoid a repetition of the ridiculous situation that occurred in 1991, when we were debating in the House whether we would go to Iraq, while the war was being shown on television.

We do not want to be in that situation again—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I said earlier is that there will be a debate in the House before we send any troops, but we hope not to have to send any. This is the objective and the wish of the government and, I hope, of all Canadians.

[English]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Prime Minister that it was our defence minister who put on the table the possibility of Canadian ground troops going into Kosovo.

We have a right in the House to know that Canadians' own representatives will give the go ahead before the lives of men and women are put on the line.

It is shameful to see the Prime Minister skating around this issue and doing everything he can to deny a rightful vote in the Parliament of Canada on this important issue. Will he not just say right now that, yes, there will be a vote?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to repeat that they are asking a hypothetical question. I said that if I am confronted with that I will look at the question as positively as possible, but we are not there.

I want members of the House of Commons to debate what the operations of NATO are at this time and what can be done to improve the situation to avoid sending ground troops into combat in Kosovo.

• (1440)

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what has been done so far is that we get a chance after the fact to debate a fait accompli decision the government has already taken.

*Oral Questions*

We are demanding in the House that we have the right to have a democratic debate and vote before the lives of Canadian men and women are put further at risk. The defence minister has put that possibility on the table.

On behalf of Canadians we want to be assured that the House will rule as to whether this goes ahead or not.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have had more debate on the involvement of Canadian troops around the world than ever before. We have taken every issue to the House, every time we were confronted, since we formed the government. This was the technique that was chosen at this time to maintain the situation, where we consult the House of Commons. But the determination is the responsibility of the government.

If opposition members think the government is not doing its job, they can have a vote of non-confidence in the government.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, during the past week, the parliaments of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia appealed to us for help in taking in, feeding and housing Kosovar refugees.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Has the government already made commitments in this regard and does it intend to use the \$100 million set aside to take the refugees in here to add to the help provided the NGOs?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, immediately after we received the call from the UN high commissioner for refugees asking us to provide a safe shelter for the Kosovars, the Prime Minister made a commitment to take in 5,000 Kosovars here in Canada, as we all know.

The border situation has stabilized somewhat, and the high commissioner has halted all requests to countries to take people in temporarily. We have now been asked primarily to give consideration to family reunification and to respond to people with very special needs, which we are prepared to do.

As to financial aid, we will clearly continue to help Albania and Macedonia.

\* \* \*

[English]

### NUNAVUT

**Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week all of Canada celebrated the creation of the new territory of Nunavut.

Science and traditional knowledge are both essential to building a solid base for the future of the people of Nunavut.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources tell the House what his department is doing to help the people of Nunavut in the area of research?

**Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me join with my fellow colleagues in congratulating the people of Nunavut and the hon. member, the great member for Nunavut, on the tremendous celebration. It was very well done indeed.

The process of building Nunavut has only just begun. Natural Resources Canada has just increased funding by \$1 million this fiscal year to the polar continental shelf project, which is Canada's primary science logistical project in northern Canada.

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### KOSOVO

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians are concerned with the Prime Minister's answers. The Prime Minister keeps saying he will do this or he may do that. Most Canadians believe that the House of Commons should make decisions about sending our soldiers into harm's way.

The question that I think many people want answered, and I hope the Prime Minister will take this seriously, is: Will he commit to a vote here in the House of Commons before we send our soldiers into a potential ground war in Kosovo? Will he commit to that?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. members are all asking hypothetical questions.

I said that I hope we will never be confronted with that situation. I want to make sure that the House is very united. On this issue we have been very united. Any weakness or any division in the position of Canada will be used by Mr. Milosevic.

We have made a commitment to our allies that this policy of ours is sustained by the Parliament of Canada. If the opposition wants to vote against it, it can have a motion tomorrow showing that it has no confidence in the government. At the same time, it will not be supporting—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

● (1445)

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister saying that democracy and the exercise of democracy are weaknesses of Canada? I thought the primary reason we were in the Balkans was to try to restore democracy there. Demonstrating democracy is a strength, not a weakness.

Why does the Prime Minister not just back up and commit that if we are going to involve Canadian forces in ground operations in the

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future in the Balkans, that he will submit that to a vote in the House prior to making that commitment?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has taken its position and we have agreed with the opposition to have a debate. We are having the debate today.

**An hon. member:** No vote.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** If the opposition wants to have a vote of non-confidence in the government, it is very easy. The opposition can have it.

The Government of Canada has made commitments of a certain position to the allies. We have come to the House and all the parties have supported our position. If they think they do not want to support the position of the government, then it is very easy. Tomorrow is an opposition day and they can have a vote tomorrow saying that they do not agree with the position of the government.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tragically the only message coming out of NATO in Brussels today was more air strikes and more bombing.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, will Canada finally show real leadership on this issue? Will Canada call for an immediate suspension of NATO bombing and Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, a return to negotiations under UN auspices with a key role for Russia and very importantly, an emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly to seek a diplomatic solution to the devastating tragedy in Kosovo?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, NATO has been very clear right from the beginning about what it expects to bring about a cessation of the hostilities and a cessation of the bombing: ensure a verifiable stop to all military action; an immediate ending of violence and repression; ensure the withdrawal of Yugoslav military police and paramilitary forces; agree with the stationing of an international military presence; agree to the unconditional safe return of the refugees and displaced persons; and provide for a political framework for the future government. That is the kind of action plan that he has to agree to before the air campaign can stop.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The Minister of National Defence just referred to an international military presence to ensure the safety of refugees returning to Kosovo. Last Friday this same minister said that presence had to be a NATO peacekeeping force.

Does the minister not recognize that aspect of Rambouillet calling for a NATO on the ground force was unacceptable then and it is unacceptable now? Will Canada clearly call for a UN or OSCE

peacekeeping force and not a NATO force to ensure this agreement can be kept?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is important here is that the people of Kosovo are able to return to their homes and are able to live in peace and security. That is what is important. We need a military force there to ensure it. I believe we need a NATO led military force. That is the position of NATO.

Can the United Nations help to resolve this problem? Can other countries help to resolve this problem? Yes, and I hope they would.

[Translation]

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the former U.S. secretary of defence, Caspar Weinberger, said, in a personal capacity, that we had neither defined the victory nor established the real objectives in Kosovo.

My question is for the Minister of National Defence. What are the immediate and long term goals for the NATO air strikes?

[English]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are there because we want the people of Kosovo to be able to live in peace and security in their home province. We want the ethnic cleansing to stop and the atrocities to stop. That is why we are there with the air campaign. The air campaign will continue until those conditions I mentioned a few moments ago are in fact met.

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, on April 1, General Wesley Clark, the NATO supreme commander directing the air campaign, stated "We can't stop paramilitary actions from the air. We never thought air power alone can stop this kind of paramilitary tragedy". The U.S. joint chief staffs reportedly agree with General Clark's assessment that a bombing campaign will not work.

● (1450)

What are the immediate long term goals of the NATO air campaign? Has the minister already made a commitment of ground troops to NATO?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the air campaign will work, and so does General Clark.

Additional resources are being put there. The Apache helicopter for example can go in at a lower level and deal with the ground forces of the Yugoslav government that are carrying out the ethnic cleansing. Our air campaign's purpose is to weaken and destroy the capability of the Yugoslav military to carry out ethnic cleansing.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the last budget invested in the health of Canadians and in the health care system.

We know that drugs are an increasingly important element of health care and that drug policies should ensure the right drug for the right patient at the right cost.

How is the federal government helping to ensure that Canadians get access to drug therapies prescribed by their doctors?

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the minister is committed to doing everything he can to ensure that the people of Canada have access to the drugs they need. That is why a conference was held on pharmacare.

As a result of that conference, it is very clear that any access to needed drug therapies must be done through the development of an integrated health model to ensure that we do not make the mistakes that have been made in the past which have often resulted in people not getting optimal drug therapy from the drugs they take.

I acknowledge the member's interest. I also say to him that the minister is determined to work co-operatively with the provinces to determine how they can provide better access for the people of Canada.

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## KOSOVO

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the event that the crisis in Kosovo escalates and ground troops are necessary, I would have to suggest that it is they who will lay their lives on the line. It would be good for our troops to know exactly where this parliament sits in support of any action that may be on the ground.

Again, I ask the Prime Minister, why will he not commit to having a vote on the issue of sending ground troops into Kosovo should that need arise?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is not the problem which is confronting the government at this time.

We want to make sure that the policies that have been accepted by NATO, and which are strongly supported by the Canadian government and obviously by the Canadian people, stop the ethnic cleansing that is going on and that Milosevic takes his troops out of Kosovo so the Kosovars can go back home in security.

We do not want to start to debate the question on how we will handle the problem of sending ground troops. We do not want to

## Oral Questions

send ground troops. We want Milosevic to accept and respect the people of Kosovo who want to be at home in Kosovo.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said in Brussels that we should set up a peacekeeping force in Kosovo, to ensure the implementation of an eventual solution to the current crisis.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether this peacekeeping force will be under the command of the UN, the OSCE, or NATO?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have not yet reached that point. When the Rambouillet accords were accepted by moderate Kosovars, it was anticipated that troops would be sent and we were prepared to take part in that operation.

What will happen after we have obtained what we are seeking, that is peace and the safe return of Kosovars to their homes? Troops will be sent and Canada will want to participate. We hope it will be under the aegis of the United Nations. It would be ideal if everyone wanted to participate, including the Russians, the Chinese, etc. However, we do know that if they do not want to participate, we can still go with the support of NATO countries.

[English]

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there has been some indication that weapons involving depleted uranium are being deployed by NATO forces in Kosovo presenting a danger to the people and to the environment of the entire Balkans.

Will the minister advise this House as to whether depleted uranium is being used, in what capacity and by whom?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of depleted uranium being used. It certainly is not being used by Canadian forces.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

[Translation]

## DISASTERS

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, could the President of the Treasury Board clarify the financial assistance received by Quebec from the Government of Canada, under the disaster financial assistance arrangements?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week, we sent Quebec a cheque of \$175 million, for the damage

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incurred and for the compensation paid out to the population by the Government of Quebec.

As regards the ice storm, we have so far made advance payments of \$250 million to the Government of Quebec and these payments could reach \$400 million in the months to come.

\* \* \*

[English]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

What is not hypothetical is the fact that Canada is at war without the consent of parliament. As a leading editorial stated today “When it comes to authorizing war, the Liberals don’t represent the Canadian people, the entire parliament does”.

I would like to remind the Prime Minister that we still live in a democracy and not a dictatorship. Will the Prime Minister give his consent before dispatching combat ground troops to Kosovo? It is the democratic thing to do. He knows it is the democratic thing to do. Will the Prime Minister give us this undertaking today?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear numerous times that such a matter, if it happens to come about, would be discussed fully in this House.

Right now we need to remain focused. We need to remain focused on the air campaign to weaken the Yugoslav capability of carrying out ethnic cleansing so that the Kosovar people can return to their homes in peace and security. That is what we should be continuing to indicate and that is what we are determined to do. We will focus on that.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the official opposition supports the NATO action in Kosovo. That is not open to question.

We are not talking about a vote of non-confidence in the government. We are talking about a vote of confidence in democracy. What is this government so afraid of? What is the Prime Minister so afraid of that he will not commit here today to a vote on whether we are going to send ground troops to Kosovo?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have had more debate in the House of Commons on foreign affairs and the deployment of troops. We made an agreement with the opposition to have more debates on that. Now the opposition wants to change the agreement that we agreed on again last week.

Let us deal with the problem we are confronted with today. We want the air strike to work. We want Milosevic to stop the ethnic cleansing and permit the Kosovars to go back home. This is the

position of the government and it is the debate we are having at this time.

I hope that the opposition, and I am very happy to see that they are back—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d’Orléans.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d’Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Canada was to contribute between 600 and 800 troops to a peacekeeping force in Kosovo, the total number required being estimated at 45,000. For land operations like the ones being contemplated, far more ground troops would be needed.

My question is for the Prime Minister. If Canada takes part in a land engagement, does it intend to increase its participation accordingly?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Rambouillet accord, which was accepted by the Kosovars and could have been accepted by Milosevic, called for a Canadian contribution of 600 to 800 troops to a 45,000-member peacekeeping force. That was the government’s position at that time.

If another proposal is made to us later, we shall see whether we need to step up our participation. However, the question is a purely hypothetical one at this point.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

No one is asking for a premature debate on ground forces. No one is asking to debate hypothetical situations. We are asking for our right as a parliament should such decisions be made in the future. All we are asking is to have a vote, not a debate, not a discussion, not a take note debate, not an opposition day, not a vote of confidence, but a vote on a specific proposal by the government should it come to that.

I ask the Prime Minister, what part of the word vote does he not understand? We are just asking for a vote. We vote on all kinds of things in this place. We just want a vote on that, should it come to it.

• (1500)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are having a debate. They want me to tell them today what we will do in years, months or days to come. I do not know.

I said that I would seriously consider a vote at that time. I do not want to create an impression that we have divisions in Canada. We are debating the position of Canada in the Balkans today and I want the support of the House of Commons.

If members want to vote they can do it tomorrow morning if they want. I thought the leaders of the parties were speaking for their parties. That is the way the government and parliament operate. It was agreed by all leaders that it was the way to debate these affairs. If they want to change the rules we will sit down with them but not before we are confronted with the problem of ground troops—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. John's East.

\* \* \*

## REFUGEES

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the minister of immigration stated that the federal government would cover all the costs of airlifting the 5,000 Kosovo refugees who were supposed to come to Canada. That cost was put at roughly \$100 million.

Would the minister be a little more clear? Now that the airlift has been cancelled, would the minister of immigration commit that \$100 million to the various relief agencies so they can assist people living in very desperate conditions in these refugee camps?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have already responded. We have committed \$22 million. We will continue to respond and work at the multilateral and bilateral levels. It is too soon to say how much it will cost us, but we know that much more needs to be done.

**The Speaker:** That would bring to a close our question period for today.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would seek unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, during consideration of Government Order, Government Business No. 23, any speech by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition may be followed by a ten minute period for questions and comments and the House shall continue to sit after 6.30 p.m. this day for the purpose of considering the said Government Order, provided that after 6.30 p.m. the Chair shall not receive any quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent to propose any motion and provided that, when no member rises to speak or at 8 a.m., whichever is earlier, the House shall adjourn until the next sitting day.

**Mr. John Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It seems to me that any debate with regard to Kosovo is meaningless and undemocratic unless there is a vote at the end of the debate.

**The Speaker:** That is a statement and not a point of order. Does the hon. government House leader have permission to put the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

## Government Orders

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1505)

[English]

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 23

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 56(1) I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, during consideration of Government Order, Government Business No. 23, any speech by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition may be followed by a ten minute period for questions and comments and the House shall continue to sit after 6.30 p.m. this day for the purpose of considering the said Government Order, provided that, after 6.30 p.m. the Chair shall not receive any quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent to propose any motion and provided that, when no member rises to speak or at 8 a.m., whichever is earlier, the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

This is done in an effort to get as many members of parliament as possible to speak to this important issue.

*And fewer than 25 members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Fewer than 25 members having risen, the motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

#### KOSOVO

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo that leads to the safe return of the refugees.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to begin this important debate I first want to pay tribute to members on all sides of the House who have shown resolve and

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leadership on this very difficult issue: the Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose tireless commitment to resolving this crisis has taken him today to Brussels where he is representing our country at the NATO foreign ministers meeting; the Minister of National Defence who has led an impressive response on the part of our armed forces; the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who moved her department the instant we received a request from the UNHCR to take in refugees driven from their homes in Kosovo; and the Minister for International Cooperation who has effectively directed her agency to take an international lead in delivering aid and support to the Kosovo refugees.

• (1510)

I wish also to salute the opposition parties in the House. Their constructive approach and their non-partisan attitude have been important examples to Canadians.

I look forward today to hearing the views and concerns of members on all sides of the House because whatever our individual views are about our involvement in Kosovo, we are each guided by our desire to do the right thing for Canada and for the international community.

Indeed, like every other member of the House, like every other speaker who will participate in this debate, this occasion to address the House today fills me with absolutely no joy. Pride, yes, at the courage of the brave Canadian men and women in our armed forces who have entered into action with their comrades from the other NATO nations and who have put their own lives at risk so that thousands can be saved.

Great warmth and deep, deep satisfaction too at the outpouring of generosity and community, of basic decency and humanity from the thousands and thousands of Canadians in every part of this great land who stepped forward to respond to the initial UNHCR appeal for help and haven for the refugees from Kosovo who have been so brutally driven from their land.

Finally, anger and profound rage at the actions of President Milosevic and his regime who have caused this entire crisis, who are still leading a campaign of terror and destruction on innocent men, women and children in Kosovo and who care nothing about the costs or consequences to their own nation.

These are the emotions we all feel, not just in the House but across Canada and around the world. This is a reflection of our values, the values that have built this country, the values that have made this a land of peace and opportunity, a land where we have made diversity not a tool for conflict but a means for a stronger, healthier way of life. These values must always guide our decisions at home and abroad.

As elected officials, as those vested with great responsibility by the men and women of our country, we must always act in a manner

that protects and promotes our interest as a nation. We must live up to our obligations as a world citizen, our obligations to the international commitments we make and our obligations to our allies.

It is these three elements, our values as Canadians, our national interest in a stable and secure Europe and our obligations as a founding member of NATO, that led Canada to take arms with its NATO partners. It is because of our values, our national interest and our obligations that we must see the job concluded.

[Translation]

By this time there can only be a very few people who still harbour any illusions about the regime of President Milosevic. For ten years now, he has presided over an unfolding tragedy in the very heart of Europe. For ten years now he has fomented conflicts that have cost hundreds of thousands of lives, displaced millions and unleashed toxic hatreds that will poison that corner of the world for a long time to come. In Croatia. Then in Bosnia.

• (1515)

It was in these conflicts that President Milosevic introduced the obscene new term of "ethnic cleansing" into the modern lexicon. In the last year, the same sickening pattern of violence against a targeted ethnic group has reached another crescendo in Kosovo.

It was President Milosevic and his regime who tripped Kosovo of its autonomy in 1989. Who broke the agreements with moderate Kosovar leaders. Who violated their own commitments of last October to NATO and the OSCE. Who still ignore United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the obligation to bring indicted war criminals to justice before the international criminal court in the Hague.

It was President Milosevic and his regime who began early last year to force Kosovars out of their homes. By the time the Rambouillet negotiations began, there were 260,000 internally displaced persons in Kosovo and Montenegro and 100,000 abroad. By the time the talks collapsed, there were 100,000 more. Now, there are a million or more displaced or exiled Kosovars.

All this before NATO took action. All this part of an obvious plan, and a clear, proven pattern.

The international community made every reasonable effort to find a diplomatic solution. Scores of diplomatic missions were sent to Belgrade. In October, an OSCE verification mission monitored a ceasefire in Kosovo, and worked on the ground to build confidence and solve local conflicts. The peace conference in Rambouillet was held. The Kosovars demonstrated courage by signing a compromise agreement. Only the Yugoslav President remained intransigent. Finally, Ambassador Holbrooke made the final appeals in Belgrade, face to face with Mr. Milosevic.



*Government Orders**[English]*

It was only after all this that NATO was forced to resort to military action. Our goals now are what they were then. The government in Belgrade must stop killing and expelling the Kosovars, withdraw its army and security forces from Kosovo, guarantee the refugees a safe return to their rightful homes, permit an international presence to assure the security of the returning Kosovars, and sign a binding, verifiable peace settlement based on the principles of the Rambouillet negotiations. This is our commitment. It is the commitment of NATO and it is the commitment of Canada as a member of NATO.

It will not happen overnight. It will not happen without more loss of life in the region, including perhaps loss of life for NATO forces, but it must happen.

It is important to understand that Canada is not acting alone. No one country can decide alone on operations or tactics. We are members of a team. We are contributing to a collective effort. And decisions are made collectively.

• (1520)

Since its creation NATO has put into action the painful lesson we learned in two world wars, that peace and stability can only be assured through effective collective security. The continued campaign of terror waged by Belgrade is a threat to peace and security in the heart of Europe. It has already had serious effects throughout the region and it also threatens the many newly emerging democracies in the region.

We had a choice. We could take action now and deal decisively with this threat, or do nothing, evade responsibility and deal in a few months or a few years with the result of our inaction. Europe has done this before, to its great cost and to ours. I do not need to explain which choice would have been more costly and more dangerous.

Last week I had the honour of welcoming our first air crews home from Aviano. Their pride in what they are doing for Canada was obvious. And their skill and courage in dangerous skies is doing all of us proud. Military action is by definition an uncertain endeavour, but I can assure Canadians that we will never enter into reckless action that will put more Canadian lives on the line without full consideration of the consequences.

Come what may, I know that every member of this House will join me in saying that the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who are delivering the force of our moral convictions deserve the support of all Canadians 100%, and they have it.

*[Translation]*

I cannot close without talking about the one aspect of this crisis that has lifted our hearts and raised our spirits. The conflict in

Kosovo is a depressing reminder of the past. But the generosity and concern that Canadians are showing for the Kosovar refugees is an uplifting reminder of what makes our country so great.

A week ago, the UNHCR asked Canada to help ease the growing refugee crisis by agreeing to take in Kosovar refugees. The minute the government agreed to bring in 5,000 refugees, the outpouring from Canadians was nothing short of a phenomenon. And it is still going on.

Toll-free telephone lines and faxes are being flooded with offers of help. Communities are opening their hearts and are eager to open their homes, in that typical Canadian way. The need is great. But our compassion is greater. And on behalf of this House, I want to thank everyone who is pitching in.

If anyone ever wanted a description of what this country is all about, if they ever wondered why we have accomplished so much as a nation, they need only look at that tremendous, spontaneous reaction of people in every corner of this great land.

• (1525)

The UNHCR decided on Friday to change its request and shelter the refugees in countries neighbouring Kosovo. Canadians are helping there too. Providing relief and desperately needed support in coping with this historic tragedy. Brave men and women who are working for non-government organizations and for organizations like the OSCE. They deserve our deep gratitude and thanks too.

Should the UNHCR call on us again, we remain ready to help here in Canada too. We are prepared to handle any request for assistance. I know Canadians are ready, too.

Canada is a peaceful and peace loving nation. A nation that has devoted itself to building a world in which all people can live in peace. Free from the threat of persecution or violent conquest. A nation that first seeks peaceful, diplomatic resolutions to conflict. A nation that has shown the world, by example, that people of terrific diversity, from every background and every corner of the world can live together in peace and harmony. That as humans we can learn from each other; and that we can bury ancient hates and grievances and build a new kind of society.

However we are also a just nation that knows that there comes a time when skilful diplomacy and dialogue must be backed up by firmness and resolve, that paralysis and inaction can cause more harm than decisive action, that not to choose is also itself a choice, and this kind of willful blindness is not an option.

To be a bystander on Kosovo today would be to betray our basic values, our national interest and our international obligations.

That is not how Canadians do things. We live up to our commitments and keep our word—all the way down the line.

*Government Orders**[English]*

What is going on there has to stop. If we are to be divided by religion, colour, language and whatnot everywhere in the world, the world will not survive.

We have an occasion to tell the government in Belgrade that this will stop. The homes of the people of Kosovo are there. They have the right to their freedom. They have the right to go to their homes and the Canadian people are with them.

**The Speaker:** There will now be a 10 minute question and answer period. I am going to limit the questions and the answers to one minute each.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has talked eloquently about the objective of ending the human tragedy in Kosovo and no one here disagrees with that goal. However, he had an opportunity today to ask for a mandate to pursue the military actions that are required to achieve that humanitarian objective.

The way one asks for a mandate for military objectives is to spell out what those objectives are, the resources and the options available, any conditions that should be attached to the use of those resources, and then to seek a mandate from parliament through a vote.

• (1530)

In 1991 the current Prime Minister attacked the government of the day for failing to hold a vote in parliament on advancing a decision to go war in the gulf. I am sure the Prime Minister would not want to repeat that mistake.

Will the Prime Minister show some democratic leadership and agree, not today but in the immediate future, to bring a motion before the House seeking a specific mandate for the military objectives necessary to achieve that humanitarian goal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I will consider the request of the Leader of the Opposition, but I make the point that the procedure selected for this type of debate was not to get up from one's seat and vote. The procedure was to give enough time for every member to speak.

We have until eight o'clock tomorrow morning to say if we are in agreement or not. It is not just to vote yes or no but to express our points of view. Everybody will be recorded. Somebody could just get up and say I agree and sit back.

I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition wants to change the rule that has worked very well so far. It gives everybody the right to get up and speak. I am just sad that he wants to formalize it in a different way. I am open to looking into that, but I thought that

giving the freedom to speak to everybody would be much better than just standing up and sitting down.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since I have been sitting in the House, I have taken part in debates on Iraq, Kosovo and the Central African Republic.

I have debated and I have spoken, but I have never voted on such an important decision as that involving the sending of Canadian troops, Canadian and Quebec soldiers, abroad.

As we sometimes say in Quebec, I ask the Prime Minister to give me not one, not two, but three good reasons why Parliament should not vote on this matter if we are sending ground troops?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, we are not sending ground troops. I think we found a very practical formula, as I have just explained to the Leader of the Opposition.

Rather than have a debate where only the leaders speak, followed by a recorded division, we decided to allow every member to speak. If the hon. member prefers to vote rather than speak, we will consider that. However, I thought that giving each member of Parliament the opportunity not only to vote but to say why they agree or disagree with the government was much more democratic than to hold a recorded division.

If you prefer this arrangement, we will consider it. However, as a parliamentarian, I prefer that members have the opportunity to speak without restriction until morning.

*[English]*

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as one of the conditions for suspending bombing the UN secretary general and NATO spokesmen have outlined the requirement of an international force that could secure the safety of Kosovars in their own homeland. Yet the defence minister persists in referring to a NATO led force to secure the safety of Kosovars.

The Prime Minister in his speech today very helpfully and wisely referred to an international force. Would he clarify whether the position of the government is as he has stated, that we are talking about an international force, or whether it is the position outlined by the defence minister, that is a NATO led force?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I do not see a disagreement. At this moment the official position is that it should be a NATO force because there is a feeling that there is no possibility of something else.

That is why I referred to an international group. I have written to President Yeltsin about my own view that the Russians should be involved. The Russians were involved in Rambouillet and I think they can play a role here.

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• (1535)

I would not personally object if the solution at the end of the day were something bigger than NATO, but so far as the position of NATO is concerned we say that it will be at the minimum a NATO force.

I would prefer to have the Russians and others there because other countries might be interested in participating. Everybody in that part of the world is afraid the conflict will extend to neighbouring nations.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we often hear the Prime Minister talk about ethnic cleansing. It is now official, what is going on in Kosovo is genocide. We should no longer call it ethnic cleansing, but genocide.

Often, the solution to genocide is war. In the Prime Minister's opinion, in view of the genocide taking place in Kosovo—his very own words—is Canada at war?

My second question is this: by talking about genocide, is the Prime Minister not backing international diplomacy into a corner? How can we sign a peace accord with a president and a regime the Prime Minister of Canada is accusing of crimes against humanity? Genocide is the worst crime against humanity.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, we are still talking about ethnic cleansing even though I used the other expression earlier. I should have said ethnic cleansing.

International law and the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague want people involved in ethnic cleansing to be considered as criminals and brought before the tribunal. We want these people to stand trial before the tribunal in The Hague. President Milosevic will not allow anybody accused of ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity to be put on trial before an international court of justice.

Last January, we deplored the fact that Madam Justice Arbour was refused entry to check allegations of ethnic cleansing. When there is a lot of ethnic cleansing, it becomes genocide—it is all a matter of terminology—and those responsible must face the consequences of their crimes against humanity.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what does the Prime Minister think the mandate of NATO is becoming?

We went to Bosnia and became a police force. Now we are in Kosovo as a police force. It seems the original purpose of NATO was to be a defence mechanism. What does he see the future holding in terms of this new role for NATO?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, NATO is responsible for peace in member countries. The case of Kosovo, as it was with Bosnia, is very dangerous to the maintenance of peace in that part of the world.

What is happening in Kosovo is a little like what happened in Bosnia. We went there as peacekeepers. At one time there was some bombing to break the resolve of President Milosevic. That led to the Dayton agreement. After that we sent some troops as peacekeepers. Our goal is to stop the ethnic cleansing going on today and to be in a position to send peacekeepers into that area so the people can live their normal lives in Kosovo.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supports the government regarding this evening's debate. In fact, we even asked that the debate last until eight o'clock tomorrow morning. This initiative is from the Bloc Québécois.

But what I want the Prime Minister to indicate is if he would be prepared, should Canada send ground troops, to let the House vote on the issue. This is what we want to know.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, this is a purely academic issue at this point.

The suggestion that was made and supported by the Bloc Québécois is to allow everyone to speak. Now, the Bloc Québécois wants everyone to vote. As far as I am concerned, this represents a change to the agreements we have had for five years regarding such debates. We have agreed to give everyone a chance to speak, and now the Bloc Québécois only wants members to vote.

• (1540)

I said I would be prepared to consider that possibility, but it does not apply at this point, because we are not sending troops. There is absolutely no question—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[*English*]

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in preparing for this debate I asked myself what do Canadians want from their parliament and from their government with respect to the issue of Kosovo and the escalating violence in the Balkans.

Of course they want parliament and they want the House, in the words of the motion, to take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo. However Canadians want us to do much more than take note of the obvious. They want us to put partisanship aside and develop a united position on a situation involving issues of life and death, war and peace, and national and international security. They want clear answers to such questions as why we are involved with NATO and Kosovo and the Balkans. What is it we hope to achieve

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politically and militarily? How do we expect to achieve it, in the air, on the ground and at the conference table?

If we are agreed on the moral, political and military objectives of our involvement in the Balkans, I believe Canadians would also want parliament to give the government a clear mandate to pursue those objectives subject to any conditions which parliament may consider prudent.

The motion before us is very fuzzy with respect to objectives and does not really seek guidance or a mandate from the House on such crucial issues as Canadian support of NATO air strikes or the commitment of Canadian ground troops to any expanded NATO effort.

The Prime Minister's remarks have filled in a few of the gaps but they have done very little to fill in the gaps on the military objectives or how we will achieve them. It appears it will be up to other members to help clarify what Canada's objectives in the Balkans should be, what mandate we should give the government, particularly militarily, to pursue those objectives, and what conditions, if any, we should impose on that mandate.

This I will now proceed to do on behalf of the official opposition and with the aid of my colleagues who will be speaking later.

First, what is the ultimate reason, the moral objective of Canada's involvement in the Balkans? This is the one issue on which there is universal agreement. We say and most members here say that it is to halt the ethnic cleansing being perpetrated by the Yugoslav government in Kosovo and to care for the victims of Serb aggression. This is the moral objective. The importance and urgency of pursuing it cannot be overemphasized.

Over the Easter break I had the opportunity to spend some precious time with our two little grandchildren aged 18 months and 9 months. These little lives, thank God, have not yet experienced any real pain or privation or violence or hatred. Those who love them will do everything in our power to make sure that they never experience those things.

When we look at the Balkans and see the stream of refugees from Kosovo, now numbering in excess of half a million people, mothers, fathers, old people, children, babes in arms, victims or potential victims of ethnic cleansing, violence from military and paramilitary and police officials, children whose eyes have seen things that no human eye should ever see, children whose ears have heard things that no human ears should hear, I say that the moral imperative of a NATO presence and a Canadian presence in the Balkans becomes abundantly clear and it becomes imperative.

In stressing this moral imperative, I am not ignoring the very real need to create a better legal framework for multinational action against inhuman acts by the government of a sovereign state. Nor

am I denying the danger of developing and practising double standards with multinational groups acting against ethnic cleansing in one instance but declining to do so in others.

As we know in the Balkans there is scarcely any ethnic group without blood on its hands. We acknowledge that the Serbs themselves have been victims as well as perpetrators of violence against ethnic minorities. At this point in time, with the magnitude of the humanitarian tragedy in Kosovo reaching the proportions that it has, I do not think we can allow these unresolved issues to stand in the way of concrete, collective action to halt the ethnic cleansing being perpetrated by the Yugoslav regime.

• (1545 )

Second, this debate should clarify what is the political objective of NATO's intervention in Kosovo and Canada's involvement in that intervention. What is the political solution that we would like to see achieved by negotiation rather than by clash of arms?

Are NATO and the Canadian government still committed to the Rambouillet agreement calling for an autonomous Kosovo within Yugoslavia? Or is NATO and our government now inclining toward supporting an independent Kosovo? If so, would Kosovo be partitioned? Would a UN or NATO patrolled safe haven be established? What would be the wider implications of an independent Kosovo for stability and ethnic peace in the region?

I believe that most members of this House support the notion that the answers to these questions are best provided not by our speculating on them, but through internationally supervised negotiations among the affected parties themselves. A clearer statement of NATO's and Canada's political objectives with respect to Kosovo, a clearer statement than that contained in the take note motion, would be to say we are determined to create a safe home for Kosovars in the region and to stabilize relations between the republic of Yugoslavia and its neighbours through internationally supervised negotiations.

Third, I turn to the area I felt the Prime Minister did not discuss thoroughly enough. What is the military objective that we are pursuing with our NATO allies through the current action against the Yugoslav regime? The motion before us is completely silent on this subject. Yet surely this is the issue on which the public has the most questions and one where we would expect the government to be seeking a more explicit mandate from this House.

The Prime Minister has not elaborated on that subject today. In fact he has tried to avoid it. From the statements made by other NATO spokespersons, we conclude that the military objective of our involvement—and I think we should be precise about this; if we are misunderstanding it, let us get it corrected—is to damage the military capability of the Yugoslav government to thereby reduce its capacity to practise ethnic cleansing and to bring that

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government to the negotiating table. That is the whole purpose of the military operation in the Balkans.

The official opposition supports this objective and Canada's participation with its NATO allies to achieve it. We support it as the regrettable means to a desirable end, namely to halt the ethnic cleansing and to force negotiations.

As we have said before, we are supportive of the NATO air strikes and Canada's participation therein. We believe this effort should be given time to have the desired effect. We should not be stampeded into premature expectations by the video game mindset that governs the TV media coverage of such operations.

It is also our view, as I wrote the Prime Minister on March 31, that once the decision was made to commit Canadian air forces to the NATO effort in Yugoslavia, we in this parliament should not engage in second guessing the mission when it has scarcely begun. Rather, we should offer our steadfast support, our political support, our moral support, our vocal support, to those brave Canadian personnel who are involved.

I would hope that every member in this House would agree that achieving the military objective of damaging the military capability of the Yugoslav regime requires us to look ahead. Surely the expectation of the public is not that we just discuss the situation today—yes, we must discuss that—but to look ahead. What if something more than the NATO air strikes is required to achieve these objectives? Where does Canada stand? Where does the government and parliament stand?

Speaking for the official opposition, we are prepared to support the commitment of Canadian ground forces to the NATO effort in Yugoslavia subject to two very important conditions. First, we are prepared to support that commitment if NATO can demonstrate that such a commitment is necessary to halt the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and provide a safe home for Kosovars in the region. In other words, if that is necessary to achieve the ultimate moral and political objective, we are prepared to consider it.

• (1550)

If we are truly committed to the moral objective of halting these atrocities, we must not give the Milosevic regime any indication that our resolve is either limited or weak.

The official opposition is therefore prepared to support the commitment of Canadian ground forces to the NATO effort in Yugoslavia if this is necessary, but also subject to the condition that the Canadian government demonstrate to the House that the commitments requested are within Canada's capability.

The Minister of National Defence has repeatedly assured us that Canadian armed forces are adequately equipped to do the dangerous jobs they are called upon to do. But the government's foreign policy repeatedly expands our commitment to peacekeeping and peace making while its management of defence budgets has shrunk our defence resources from \$12 billion per year to \$9.3 billion.

Our land forces have been especially neglected. Concerns with regard to Canadian land forces equipment have been raised by the auditor general as well as by many other experts. In some categories of equipment, Canada is at least a generation behind its NATO allies.

If our Canadian forces are called upon to do a job in Kosovo or anywhere else, we must insist and do insist that they be given the tools to do the job. Hence the second condition, the need for hard questions about the adequacy of our resources and the need for straight answers.

In conclusion, we are supportive of this take note motion before the House, as far as it goes, but as hon. members will gather, we believe that the House can and should do more than simply take note and concur with generalities. We believe that parliament should spell out clearly for the benefit of all Canadians the moral, political and military objectives of our involvement with NATO in Yugoslavia. Canadians will support these objectives if they are clearly spelled out, but if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will rally to its call?

If we are agreed on objectives, I also believe the government could then ask the House for an explicit mandate to pursue those objectives. Speaking for the official opposition, we would be prepared to give that mandate, provided that the military objectives were subject to the two conditions which I have outlined.

In other words I am urging the government to follow up this take note debate with a more substantive motion along the lines of the following:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to: one, attain the moral objective of halting the ethnic cleansing being perpetrated by the Yugoslav government in Kosovo and caring for the victims of Serb aggression; two, achieve the political objective of creating a safe home for Kosovars in the region and stabilizing relations between the republic of Yugoslavia and its neighbours through negotiation; three, pursue the military objectives of damaging the military capability of the Yugoslav government, to reduce its capacity to practise ethnic cleansing and to bring the Yugoslav government to the negotiating table;

And that this House mandate the government to pursue this military objective through the commitment of Canadian forces to

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participation in NATO operations subject to the following conditions: (a) that NATO demonstrate that such commitments are necessary to halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and to provide a safe home for Kosovars on their own soil; and (b) that the government demonstrate to this House that the commitment of Canadian forces requested by NATO is within Canada's capabilities.

That is the type of motion I would have liked to have seen and would expect to be brought by a government seeking a mandate of the House. To encourage the government to bring forward such a motion and to seek such a mandate, I move that the take note motion before the House be amended by simply adding the words:

And that this House take note that the government's determination to resolve the conflict would have more credibility after the adoption of a motion submitted to this House specifying the moral, political and military objectives of Canada's involvement with NATO in the region and a request for a mandate to continue that involvement, subject to such conditions as this House may impose.

I would expect that if that motion were put in the grand democratic traditions of the House, it would be a votable motion.

• (1555)

**The Speaker:** I will of course look over the amendment. In the meantime we have 10 minutes of questions and comments. We will limit the questions and the answers to one minute maximum.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke of a motion that would involve a vote in the House. During question period he proposed a vote that pertained to the deployment of ground troops. The Prime Minister, while not rejecting the possibility of a vote out of hand, did evade a direct reply.

In my constituency office during the Croatian struggles and the Bosnian struggles I had all kinds of representations and anger on both sides. If the Prime Minister had said there would be a vote on ground troops, is it not true that every one of us would be subject to pressure and intimidation from both sides in our ridings?

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, on what important issue are we not subject to those kinds of pressures? That is part of the democratic process.

Members from all parties today were not even asking for the form of the motion. They were just asking that if the commitment of ground troops is part of the possible future action in the Balkans that the Prime Minister would commit today to get a mandate from parliament through a vote before that action was taken.

I do not think that is unreasonable. I think any representations on that issue by the public to ourselves would certainly be welcome, at least on this side of the House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in an article published by the *Ottawa Citizen*, the Reform Party critic for foreign affairs said, and I quote:

[English]

“The Rambouillet formula may no longer be viable but sooner or later Mr. Milosevic will negotiate and negotiations are the only means of resolving this dispute”.

[Translation]

My question is for the leader of the official opposition. Does the Reform Party maintain that position, or does it believe that ground troops should now be sent in, since Mr. Milosevic has shown that he does not want to negotiate peace for Kosovo?

[English]

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I suggest that the two options are not mutually exclusive. The point of the military intervention is to try to force the Yugoslav regime to that negotiating table which I think all members would prefer to be the forum in which this issue is resolved. The two issues fit together.

We all wish that these people would come to the negotiating table without the persuasion of bombs and air attacks. That would be the hope of every member in this House. But if that will not happen, and it has not happened, then we say regretfully that we endorse the military action required to bring about the negotiations that members in the House would hope would bring a solution.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition a question with respect to the issue of the future and how the global community responds to a crisis of this nature.

Obviously the current situation is critical. Many people are expressing deep concern about the possibility that somehow NATO is taking on to itself a new and very dangerous role of somehow being the enforcer of international humanitarian law. In fact this is a role that the United Nations, clearly needing some form of change in terms of its ability to respond, should be taking on and not NATO when we look at the tragedy in Turkey and the situation of the Kurds in Turkey, when we look at East Timor, Colombia, Sudan and elsewhere.

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I want to ask the Leader of the Official Opposition whether he agrees with the need for a new credible international mechanism strengthening the United Nations, getting around some of the paralysis that can result from the veto under the present structure. Does he agree with that need and with the need to look into what many see as the hypocrisy and the double standard that currently exists—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I would agree that the current international legal framework for dealing with these crises is inadequate and that we should be working toward creating a better framework. I would not put all my eggs in the UN basket because, as the member knows, in this case the veto of action by the UN on the part of Russia and presumably China is enough to paralyze action.

• (1600)

However, recognizing the need for this better international legal framework, I would still say that the inadequacy of that framework should not deter us from doing something in this particular situation. I think we should make it clear that we are not trying to generalize from this situation to every situation in the world. I do not think we should say that what is being done here is perfect. However, we should not let the inadequacy of the international legal framework prevent us from acting when we know there are laws being broken: thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not rape, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not hurt women and children.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. Some of the concerns which he has are shared by all members of the House.

I was quite concerned that the Minister of National Defence evaded the question with respect to whether a commitment has already been made to NATO, if there are to be ground troops, that Canada is in.

My question is for the Leader of the Opposition who has been calling for a vote in the House and who has proposed an amendment to the House. Could he explain why he failed to stand in the House to block the government's motion which prohibits a vote on this amendment, as we did earlier?

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, we want to have this debate, but more important, we are not insisting that there be a vote on this particular motion. It is a motherhood motion. We know what the vote would be without taking it. What we are asking for is a specific vote on a mandate for the government to take military action in the Balkans, particularly if that action involves the use of ground troops. We expect a motion to come from the government and that it be debated with a vote at the end of it. That is the debate and the vote that we are specifically looking for.

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments.

Notwithstanding the tenor of question period which concerned ground troops, it is my understanding that the hon. Leader of the Opposition supports Canada's role in the air war, that he supports the air war conducted by NATO and its possible expansion. That is my understanding.

The prime minister mentioned that he had written to the President of Russia. How important does the Leader of the Opposition think it is that Russia be involved in this situation?

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, again I do not want to presume to answer for other members, but I would expect that the majority of members in the House feel that the more that can be done to involve the Russian government and the Russian people in the resolution of this issue the better. The historic ties between the Serbs and the Russian government and the Russian people are deep and long. In many respects these ties are deeper and longer than their ties or connections with anyone in the west.

Yes, the Russians should have an influence and anything that could be done to bring that influence to bear in a positive way, not simply through the supplying of arms, would be helpful.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party said that he absolutely wanted to have a vote in the House at the end of the present debate.

He has a unique opportunity to decide what the House will do tomorrow. Why has he not introduced a motion which would have forced a vote on the government instead of just talking about it? This would have been more effective.

[*English*]

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question before.

Our principal point, and perhaps I have to make it again because it did not sink in with some members, is that if the government is considering the use of ground troops or an expanded role for Canada in the Balkans it should come to the House with a votable motion seeking a mandate on which we will have a debate and a vote. This is not a vote of non-confidence in the government. Hopefully it would be a vote of confidence in whatever mandate is given the government and would be a help rather than a hindrance to solving this serious problem.

**The Speaker:** I find the amendment moved by the hon. member for Calgary Southwest to be in order.

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• (1605)

[Translation]

Before giving the floor to the leader of the Bloc Québécois, I would point out that, as of now, speeches will be 20 minutes long and questions and comments, ten minutes.

[English]

**Mr. John Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With respect to your ruling, you indicated that the amendment put by the Leader of the Opposition is in order. Do we then take it that there will be a vote at the end of the debate on the amendment?

**The Speaker:** The direct answer to your question is no, there will not be a vote because it does not alter the original order which the House adopted today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we will support the motion and the amendment even if I believe that neither truly addresses the need to find a short and long term political solution, which would not only guarantee the return of refugees to their homes but also respect for the rights of the Kosovar people.

However, we deplore the lack of information provided to members, contrary to what was done during the campaign against Iraq in 1991. In that case, party leaders were consulted and invited to be part of the Canadian effort, in particular through regular briefing sessions. In this case, we got better information from RDI and CNN.

To compensate for the flaws of the resolution and what appears to be an improvised government policy, I wish to make specific proposals, on behalf of my party, which should allow Canada to play a constructive role in ensuring peace and stability, not only in Kosovo but in all the Balkans.

We are witnessing one of the most troubling human tragedies to occur since the end of the second world war, troubling because of the actions of the Serbian army and because the present situation is the direct result of President Milosevic's challenge to the international community.

We have seen, in recent history, obvious instances of pure and simple aggression for the purpose of ethnic cleansing and territorial expansion. This was the case during the aggressions against the Kurdish and Tibetan people and during the tragedy which occurred in Rwanda. We did not learn all the lessons those tragedies and the first crisis in the Balkans should have thought us.

In this case, we are witnessing not so much a classic case of territorial expansion, since Yugoslavia already controlled Kosovo, as a much more pernicious conflict, a much greater threat to peace and security in Europe. Rather we are faced with a situation where a national minority, namely the Serbs in Kosovo, with the

encouragement of the Serb majority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, are trying to forcibly expel from Kosovo the Albanian majority, which represents 90% of the population.

The Serb aggression is unacceptable. It is aimed at dispossessing the Kosovars of their belongings, their homes and their land. This aggression is all the more repugnant as it is also aimed at dispossessing the Kosovars of their past by erasing any sign of their historical presence in Kosovo. It is simply an attempt to rewrite history.

At a time when human rights and territorial status quo have been recognized by virtually every country concerned, especially through the Helsinki accords, it is of paramount importance to find a political solution to this conflict.

• (1610)

We would have liked the present crisis to be dealt with under the aegis of the United Nations as was the case when Iraq attacked Kuwait. Unfortunately, close historical ties between Russia and Serbia and special political ties between Yugoslavia and China made it impossible.

We were faced, therefore, with the choice of either standing by helplessly as the Kosovars were slowly stripped of their nation and territory by the Serbs or finding a way to counter Serbia's expansionism.

Given the situation in Europe, following the failure of the mediation carried out by the contact group and the refusal by President Milosevic to ratify the Rambouillet agreements, NATO provided us with the only option available to put an end to the abuses committed by the Serbs in Kosovo.

This is why the Bloc Québécois supported NATO's strategy to use air operations to get the Yugoslav government to make concessions and supported Canada's participation in these air strikes.

Unfortunately, no one had foreseen how brutal, swift and efficient the ethnic cleansing operation of the Serbian government would be in Kosovo. We are now facing a whole new situation that is forcing our allies to reassess their strategy in the Balkans.

So, if need be, the Bloc Québécois will support the dispatch of NATO ground troops to Kosovo. We will also support Canada's direct or indirect participation in a logistics force, for instance, in order to get President Milosevic to back down and to give up his policy for Kosovo that has turned him into a war criminal and possibly the instigator of genocide.

However, parliament must be kept better informed of the military and diplomatic strategy of the government. The consent of members of parliament must be sought before Canadian troops take part in ground battles. Parliament must take position, members must be able to express their viewpoints and to vote on this issue. I have trouble understanding why the Prime Minister refuses to consult the House since he knows he can count on the support of all



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parties and that this support would reinforce Canada's position and strengthen the unity needed in such hard times.

But before considering sending ground troops to Kosovo, before proceeding with this ultimate solution which would mean that NATO forces would engage in ground combat with Serbian forces, the Bloc Québécois believes that a last effort should be made to resolve this crisis through the United Nations, which would have the advantage of involving Russia.

In the meantime, there are two things Canada can do to alleviate the human misery created by this conflict and to prevent a ground attack, the cost of which could be high in terms of human lives, from becoming necessary.

First of all, we must deploy all available resources to alleviate the suffering and improve living conditions of Kosovar refugees in Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Therefore it is important to provide appropriate humanitarian aid and logistical support to the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

In this regard, I must indicate our support for the Office of the High Commissioner's decision not to play President Milosevic's game. Canada must certainly do everything it can in terms of humanitarian aid, including accepting, on a temporary basis, a certain number of refugees should it become necessary—and I insist on that point—or to allow people to be reunited with family members who already are in Canada.

I say on a temporary basis because the aggression by the Serbs must stop and its effects must be reversed. This means that all refugees, wherever they are, must ultimately be free to go home safely, as soon as possible, to rebuild their life and their country.

The contrary would be tantamount to supporting the policy of the *fait accompli* which President Milosevic has been trying to impose. We must not support that policy in any way, because it would only add to the human tragedy experienced by each refugee and would drive the Kosovar people to despair.

I must also congratulate NATO for refusing to contemplate any partition of the territory of Kosovo, I must also congratulate NATO for refusing to contemplate any partition of the territory of Kosovo, for this would be tantamount to conceding victory to Milosevic and to rewarding aggression.

Where territorial integrity is concerned, Kosovo must be treated in the same way Slovenia, Bosnia and Croatia were. It must also be understood that Kosovo cannot be reintegrated with Yugoslavia as if nothing had happened.

Since certain aspects of the Rambouillet accords were rendered obsolete by the obstinacy of President Milosevic, any solution to the current crisis must be based on the Kosovar people's right to self-determination.

• (1615)

Given the variety of abuses and atrocities perpetrated by Serb troops and militiamen in Kosovo, it is unthinkable to again put the Albanian population at the mercy of the Serbian political power in Belgrade.

In order to preserve some chance of avoiding a ground war, Canada must take advantage of all available opportunities, all international forums of which it is a member, to promote a peaceful and political solution to this conflict.

To that end, the federal Yugoslav government must agree to bow to international will and to the five conditions presented by NATO if the air strikes are to come to an end.

This means that Canada, via the UN, NATO and the OSCE, must take advantage of its diplomatic influence to encourage Yugoslavia to respect the rights of the Kosovo people, to put an end to its armed aggression, and to negotiate a definitive and political solution for the future of the Kosovars.

If, despite the efforts of Canada as a member of the security council, the UN proved unable to find a rapid solution to the current conflict, it will have demonstrated that it is incapable of settling regional conflicts the way it is presently organized, and that a major reform of its institutions and its operations is required.

Canada must become a proponent of such a reform, and use its security council seat to make that point.

The conflicts in Rwanda, the Congo and Kosovo are just some of the most recent sad examples of the United Nations' inability to act.

Second, the UN has also shown that, in the absence of such a reform, regional or interstate military organizations will likely increasingly themselves take whatever measures they deem necessary to ensure international security and to protect human rights.

President Milosevic must be reminded that the world has changed since his glorious days as a communist apparatchik. As we enter the new era of international law, the despots, tyrants, terrorists and dictators are being forced to understand that they do not enjoy the immunity they thought they had.

Furthermore, those responsible for crimes against humanity, torture or terrorism must understand that they will not escape justice.

This is a new reality showing the change in international law, which three recent examples will amply illustrate.

First, there is the creation of an international criminal tribunal for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. This tribunal has already

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handed down a number of decisions and is preparing to lay new charges against others responsible for war crimes and massacres.

Second, there are the charges and the extradition proceedings against General Pinochet brought by Spain.

Third, there is the trial in Holland, under Scottish law, of the Libyans charged in the terrorist destruction of the Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Finally, beyond the tragedy currently unfolding in Kosovo, I would like to make a suggestion to put a stop to such drama in Europe, Africa or anywhere else in the world.

As quickly as possible following the restitution of the individual and collective rights of the people of Kosovo, I suggest that Canada, together with other members of the Organization on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, promote an international conference on the status and rights of national minorities in Europe and the Balkans in particular.

Based on the model of the conference in Helsinki in 1975, this conference, to which all the countries of Europe, Canada and the United States would be invited, would have specific objectives on the recognition of minority rights. At the centre of these objectives would be the issue of human rights, both individual and collective.

These objectives could be formalized in a diplomatic agreement between signatory states, like the 1975 agreement or, ideally, through a treaty that would be more binding on the signatories. These countries would therefore enter into international obligations that would go beyond mere wishful thinking and guarantee the individual and collective rights of national minorities.

That formula could also be used by countries from other continents, which could adjust their objectives and their means to the prevailing political culture, or to the values that produce a consensus.

How can we achieve that? This could be done in two stages.

First, in the short term, we must directly target the sources of instability in the Balkans, namely the difficult economic situation of the countries in that region, and the feeling of exclusion from major European political institutions.

In this regard, we must recognize the wisdom of the position adopted last week by the foreign ministers of the European community. These countries have agreed to set up a fund of at least 250 million Euros to establish a security pact for the Balkans, similar to the Marshall plan.

This fund for Balkan countries would be tied to partnership agreements with the European community, including on issues such as economic assistance and trade privileges.

• (1620)

So, this is a step in the right direction. Following that, we will have to go further and to integrate interested Balkan countries into the European community and NATO. This is necessary to ensure Europe's stability, the region's prosperity and the security of Europe's economic and military partners.

Second, we will have to convene the international conference on the status and rights of national minorities in Europe to which I alluded earlier.

Since this is a long term effort, the preparations for such a conference must begin immediately after the end of the conflict in Kosovo, to ensure its success as early as possible.

This is indeed an ambitious project, but the situation and the evolution of international law require us to be creative while pursuing lofty ideals.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on the fact that his party has aligned itself with the government position.

When you admit that the cause is just and that force is necessary, when you are even prepared to go further than the government and now call for the commitment of ground troops, why do you put political conditions on your position today?

You say that we do not have enough information, when we had all the necessary information in committee, when we are holding a debate in the House today that gives each of us an opportunity to discuss the issue. Why weaken our position, the position of the Parliament of Canada, with a condition that strikes me as completely political—

**The Speaker:** All questions must be put through the Chair. The hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is only natural that we discuss the politics of this issue, since it is a highly political issue.

Second, there is a big difference between the information provided to members of the House in 1991 and what we are seeing now. I was critical of the fact that in 1991 we were in the process of voting when troops had already been sent to Iraq and we were watching the events on television. That was obviously one drawback.

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At this time, since we have already discussed air strikes in previous debates in the House, I am not questioning today's debate. However, the information provided in the briefing this morning was completely inadequate. We were asked if we had any questions.

We should be briefed each morning, like we were in 1991. Back then, the Prime Minister invited all party leaders to become members of the Privy Council. Mrs. McLaughlin, who was then leader of the NDP, accepted the invitation. Right now, this information is not available. We go after it—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois. The member for Richmond—Arthabaska for questions and comments.

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I share the frustration felt by the leader of the Bloc Québécois with regard to information and consultation.

It is an extremely important issue. There is a lack of information. How can we be totally convinced of what is going on in Kosovo, in terms of the involvement of Canada and NATO? We cannot be convinced of anything because we do not have the necessary information.

During the first week of the conflict, I received one phone call a day. I was asked if I had watched the news on CNN. That is where the information came from. During the second week, I received one call every two or three days. During the third week, I received one call every four days. It has now been six days since I last received a call.

How can I keep my staff informed? How can my staff keep my constituents informed?

If it was so important, why did the leader of the Bloc Québécois not support our request to recall the House during the Easter break?

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, our discussions called for an emergency debate today, as was announced. Members of the Bloc Québécois who sit on the foreign affairs committee, particularly the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, followed all the committee meetings.

Let us get back to the information issue, which I think is a major issue. We just came back here today, and so did our counterparts in Washington.

• (1625)

There could have been follow-up throughout the entire week, had there been important information. I come back to my colleague, who earlier said "You are weakening the position by asking questions". I say to him that he is weakening the position by not providing information.

Those who are informed provide better support than those who are not. There is a lesson in that. Canadian history is marked by a division in important debates separating people in Quebec and Canada on the issue of war.

The government should inform us, ensure that we are always aware of what is going on and especially of military strategies—we are not naïve—and hold a vote. This would strengthen Canada's position. It is not those who are not doing anything that weaken it, but rather those who should be doing something.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago in late March, Canadian poet Raymond Souster wrote about another distant conflict. It is "almost impossible to think of, to comprehend the words war, bombings and air raid shelters with this afternoon sun glowing, spring-like".

Today, as we participate in this important debate on Kosovo in the safety of this House and in the security of this country, it still seems almost impossible to think of.

Night after night Canadians and the world community watch in horror as thousands upon thousands of desperate people flee for their lives. They leave behind their homes, their work, their communities and even members of their own family. They bring with them those few possessions they can carry and their anguish.

Our television screens are lit as well by pictures of destruction from air strikes and bombs. Here too, innocent civilians are losing their homes, their neighbourhoods and their lives.

Canadians who came to this country from both sides of the conflict watch the news and search the Internet for signs that their relatives are safe. In communities across Canada families and friends of our men and women of the armed forces watch and worry as the people they love risk their lives on dangerous military missions.

Today our first and last thoughts must be with all of those people whose lives are touched by the tragic events in Kosovo. We are indebted to the service personnel who put their lives at risk and to the aid workers who are helping the refugees in Albania and Macedonia.

While thousands of ethnic Albanians flee from Kosovo, Canada with other NATO countries, is bombing Serbia. We are doing this to a country that has not waged war on Canada all without a resolution from the government, a debate on that resolution or a vote by the House of Commons, and without the sanction of the United Nations General Assembly.

How did we get here? How did we get to this terrible place?

For some years now, Yugoslav President Milosevic has been ruthlessly suppressing the rights of former states within Yugoslavia. By March of this year, as Mr. Milosevic spurned all attempts at peace talks, he amassed 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo and

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began a campaign of brutal ethnic cleansing. The United Nations Security Council failed to act.

At this point all 19 NATO countries agreed to intervene with an air campaign intended to stop the atrocities of Milosevic's forces, push him to withdraw from Kosovo and accept the entry of an international military presence to protect civilians.

• (1630)

For New Democrats the maintenance of peace has always been and remains our highest priority. Any decision to take military action is particularly troubling for us as internationalists seeking a peaceful world order based on respect for human rights.

However, the scale of the human disaster unfolding before the world made it imperative in our view for the international community to act. To sit by and do nothing was simply not an option.

As Tommy Douglas said about World War II:

When a group of lawless men endeavour to destroy the fabric of law and order by which alone human society is possible, then I have a responsibility to discharge.

Our actions are directed against the lawless violations of human rights on a massive scale in Kosovo, not against the people of Serbia. In this conflict, as in all wars, there is a tendency to demonize entire peoples and we must resist that. We must not forget the tragedy suffered by the Serbian people down through history and the threats which they face in the current catastrophe. At the same time we are determined to pursue those guilty of war crimes through the international criminal court.

Not all Canadians support armed intervention. Some activists in the peace movement oppose Canadian intervention in the conflict because of their pacifist convictions or because of different interpretations of the nature of the crisis.

My caucus colleagues and I understand and respect such views. We urge all members of the House to listen carefully and thoughtfully to them as we all struggle to determine the responsible course of action in line with our conscience and our convictions.

Since NATO's air campaign began Canadians have watched events with anguish and dismay. We must now face the reality that the air campaign clearly did not stop the Milosevic atrocities in Kosovo as the NATO leadership led us to believe. In fact the brutal evacuation of Albanian Kosovars from their homeland has increased during the NATO strikes.

Today's debate allows us all to take stock of this grave and difficult situation and to ask ourselves: Where do we go from here?

The government's response has been to ask for patience, to wait and see if the military force alone will force Milosevic's hand.

[Translation]

The government decided to focus only on military action. It decided to ignore political solutions and to forget Canada's internationalist tradition.

[English]

Canadians do not want their government to be so mesmerized by military developments that it fails to explore every possible political or diplomatic opening that might end the bombing at the earliest possible opportunity and allow the Kosovar refugees to return home safely.

Today we call on the Canadian government to take the full diplomatic action that Canadians expect of their government; to end the bombing at the earliest possible opportunity that gives the Kosovar refugees the chance to return safely home.

We call on the government to initiate a diplomatic offer to the Milosevic government that if it will stop the ethnic cleansing, if it will stop the atrocities and the killing and agree to come to the negotiating table, then NATO will suspend its bombing.

Since this crisis began there has not been a meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We also call on the Canadian government to call for a special meeting to address the crisis in Kosovo. We need to make every effort to build the capacity of the United Nations to act.

Our first priority must be to seek out every diplomatic and political opportunity that could bring the bombing to an end at the earliest opportunity.

• (1635)

The Milosevic regime may refuse all diplomatic and political overtures. The air campaign may fail to secure an agreement to allow an international force to accompany the Kosovar refugees back to their homes in safety.

Should that be the case, the Canadian government and other members of the international community will no doubt explore what other means can be used to stop the ethnic cleansing, including the use of ground troops. In that instance, I and my New Democratic Party caucus colleagues insist that any decision to use ground troops must be made by members of this House only after a full debate and only on an explicit resolution presented by the government, with a vote to follow.

We say this not to prejudice that important decision, but it is a democratic imperative that the House of Commons be allowed to decide this question affecting the state of international security and the safety of the men and women in our armed forces.

Last week the Minister of National Defence sent out confusing and contradictory signals about the state of planning within NATO for the use of ground troops.

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[*Translation*]

If the government introduces a resolution on sending troops, the mission must be clear. The objectives of the air campaign were imprecise and not achieved. In fact, the humanitarian crisis was worsened as the result of the air strikes.

[*English*]

Today we repeat our call for the government to seek international agreement for the force of ground troops that will accompany the Kosovar refugees back into Kosovo to be under some authority other than NATO. A force organized under the authority of the UN or of the OSCE might have some chance of gaining the acceptance of the Milosevic regime and bring us closer to a political settlement, especially if Russia were to be part of that force. Indeed, securing Russian participation in diplomatic efforts to resolve this crisis is essential.

I am pleased that in debate this afternoon the Prime Minister indicated that he very much agreed with us in that regard. We are asking that the government play a more proactive role in advancing this position.

While the scale of the refugee crisis in Kosovo surprised NATO planners, the generous response of the public to that crisis came as no surprise to Canadians. We were pleased that our government joined with other countries in offering to temporarily evacuate thousands of Kosovars to Canada should that have been necessary and desirable.

On Friday, as we know, that plan was suspended after consultations with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. To remain steadfastly focused on the objective of Kosovars returning safely to their own homeland, we urge the government to continue working closely with the UNHCR. We hope and trust that the government will be dedicating all of the resources it was prepared to put into bringing refugees here to providing relief and support to refugees in Albania and Macedonia.

As we grapple with the Kosovo catastrophe we must learn from it what needs to be accomplished internationally if we are to avoid such crises in the future or handle them in a more effective way.

Some who have opposed Canada's military intervention have rightly pointed out the hypocrisy of NATO's intervention in this case of human rights violation and the very same countries' lack of action in many other cases of gross human rights violations taking place around the world.

One reaction to this hypocrisy is to argue for consistency. If governments did nothing about East Timor or the Kurds, the argument goes, if they stood by during the genocide in Rwanda, then they should do the same in this crisis.

There is another reaction to this hypocrisy, a more hopeful one. This could be a major turning point, where governments that have in the past turned a blind eye to gross human rights violations are now prepared to take bold action to face up to them.

• (1640)

If we are to make the legacy of the Kosovo tragedy a lasting and positive legacy, if we are to make this the beginning of a time when governments take their responsibilities for human rights seriously, then we have a lot of work to do. We must work to improve the capacity of the United Nations to deal with such situations.

Lack of consensus on the security council prevented the UN from taking a lead role in this desperate crisis, but current political differences on the security council were only a part of the problem.

The United Nations, like all of our current international organizations, is based on relations between sovereign states. Even though the UN charter refers to world citizenship, it has difficulties acting to protect the rights of world citizens where conflicts take place within sovereign states. This problem is one of the biggest challenges before the international community and we must deal with it in coming years.

The absence of a role for the UN and OSCE in this crisis left NATO as the only organization capable of taking action. We cannot allow the particular events of this crisis to permit NATO to become the self-appointed policeman of the world. Since the end of the cold war NATO has been very much an alliance in search of a role. That role cannot, in the long term, be as a free agent operating outside of the authority of the United Nations.

The crisis in Kosovo provides the latest proof of the terrible human cost of letting conflicts fester to the point where large scale military action is required to counter a humanitarian disaster.

We have to work at finding new ways of resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner. I want to commend Project Ploughshares, Voices of Women and other peace organizations for their excellent work in this regard.

Many potential civil conflicts could be prevented with progressive, enlightened policies of international economic assistance and co-operation. In this regard, unfortunately, the government has been heading precisely in the wrong direction. It has steadily eroded budgets for overseas development assistance and it continues to support an international economic order of unrestrained markets that pushes the poorest nations further and further to the economic margins. These policies will make civil strife and conflict more rather than less likely in the coming years.

We know there is no quick fix solution to the Kosovo catastrophe. The road to peace will not be smooth. But as we debate this issue let us remember that with every hour that passes more

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families flee their homes for safety outside Kosovo, more and more men and women sift through the rubble of their homes accidentally destroyed by air strikes, and more Canadians serving overseas experience trauma and risk their lives. For the sake of all these world citizens it is imperative that we explore every possible avenue to resolve the conflict quickly and peaceably.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to explore with the hon. member what she would precisely propose in terms of this diplomatic initiative which she seems to feel we have failed to explore, given the background of the Rambouillet accord.

The hon. member well knows, of course, that the OSCE operates on a consensus minus one basis and therefore no operation to the OSCE would have been possible without the agreement of Russia and many other countries. The UN was blocked through a Russian and a possible Chinese veto, as we know.

• (1645)

What precisely does she say we should have done? Does she feel we should have done nothing and allowed the situation to develop recognizing the fact we needed troops? What has been said is we failed to pursue every diplomatic initiative. What else could we have concretely done? What would she have diplomatically pursued if she were in our place? How can she help the House?

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member knows very well that I did not make the assertions that he attributed to me. Rather the entire thrust of what I think every member of this House needs to be concerned about, I want to reassure the member that I was very concerned about and I put my comments forward, is where we go from here.

It is very important that we not be stuck back at the point of saying that the Rambouillet accord said thus and so and therefore nothing else is a possibility. It is very important that we recognize that we have been bombing for 19 straight days. The objective that was set out at the beginning and thought to be achievable within a few days has simply not come anywhere closer to being achieved.

We absolutely have to redouble our efforts to seek every single possible avenue for a peaceful and early solution. How? Very specifically, propose to Milosevic, take a bold initiative that if he will stop the atrocities, if he will stop the killing, if he will agree to come to the table, then we will stop the NATO bombing.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, for all intents and purposes, Canada is at war. Canadian pilots are dropping bombs. People are being killed. Yet we have not taken a vote in the House of Commons in terms of a declaration of war. In any event as I understand it, the NDP supports the actions of the government so in effect supports this war that is taking place.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has indicated that under certain conditions the official opposition would support the sending of ground troops into Kosovo. I ask the leader of the New Democratic Party, under what conditions would her party support, if at all, the sending of ground troops into Kosovo?

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, first I want to reiterate, because it is extremely important that we do so, that we have not exhausted all possibilities. We simply cannot take the position that only more military intervention is going to bring us to a peaceful solution. I want to carefully restate that.

This was a question that was addressed by my colleagues the international affairs critic and defence critic on March 31. We took the position then calling for us to redouble our efforts to seek a diplomatic and political solution. Should the issue of ground troops become one as an absolute last resort, then it is absolutely incumbent upon the government to come before parliament to set out clearly the military objectives, the terms of engagement, what precisely it is the government is proposing and after a full debate in parliament, that no such initiative be launched without there being a full vote of parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the leader of the New Democratic Party still believes a diplomatic solution is possible and desirable, can she indicate to us whether she believes the solution of autonomy is still possible within Yugoslavia, or whether what needs to be looked at, as I have just asked the Prime Minister, is a totally different status for Kosovo now, an international protectorate or protected zone, in light of recent events which make it very unlikely that Kosovars will want to co-exist with Serbs within their territory at this time?

[*English*]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, we have to recognize that these are all options, that these are all matters that need to be fully explored. They can only be explored if we can get to the negotiating table. These are not options that can be considered in the context of relentless hostilities, aggression and bombing. We have to get to the table.

• (1650)

It is absolutely critical for us to recognize that we have to move forward. If it is true that the bombings are achieving their desired objective, which is what NATO keeps claiming, then surely it is true that the situation is closer to one where the Milosevic regime will be brought to the negotiating table. We are simply saying that these and all options must be the subject of negotiation or we are not going to find a solution to the current Kosovo catastrophe.

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[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp:** Mr. Speaker, some people have said it was impossible to negotiate with someone who had committed, or was presumed to have committed, crimes against humanity.

What is the hon. member's response to those who think in this way and believe that no negotiation with Slobodan Milosevic is possible?

[*English*]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, there is nobody in the entire world community who is not horrified by the crimes against humanity committed by President Milosevic. But let us not give up on the notion that it is possible to come to the point of being able to negotiate a peaceful solution. If we are going to completely give up on the possibility that this can be achieved, then does the NATO bombing not constitute a hoax?

The continuing stated purpose of the NATO initiatives has been to bring Milosevic to the negotiating table. That has to remain our objective, but it is quite clear through 19 days of bombing that has not been achieved. We have to try every single possible avenue to reach a negotiated and peaceful settlement. We will only be able to do that if we can keep taking bold initiatives that have some potential to put an end to the hostilities on both sides and get down to negotiations.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak in the House and to Canadians about the ongoing military conflict in Yugoslavia and to offer my remarks on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party. This discussion is overdue and a substantive debate and vote is what Canadians deserve.

Members of the Canadian armed forces are taking part in a justified offensive action to end the slaughter and to return the basic rights of innocents in Kosovo. It is ironic that the Prime Minister and his government have had to be cajoled and shamed into consulting the elected representatives of Canadians with respect to Canada's participation in this conflict.

Before today, there have been two occasions when the government has asked members of this House to take note of the situation in Kosovo, on October 7, 1998 and on February 17, 1999. Both of these discussions were held under extraordinary rules; no motion was before the House for approval and a constitutional rule requiring the attendance of members was not observed. Parliament has never been asked to vote on this terrible matter in Kosovo.

War is not familiar to those of my generation. It is something I wanted to exist only in old film reels, yellowed newspapers and history books. Conflict in central Europe was something that was meant to be restricted to the archives or the annals of time. Sadly

we find the atrocities of Kosovo dominating our mass media. We cannot ignore the lessons of history or shirk the Canadian tradition of service that we inherit.

[*Translation*]

I offer my support and that of my party to the women and men of the Canadian armed forces. They are courageously putting their lives on the line to restore peace and stability to the province of Kosovo.

• (1655 )

[*English*]

Few of us here can properly appreciate or understand the commitment that our forces are making to end the terror of ethnic cleansing and racial murder in Yugoslavia. Our commitment to peace and safety of Canadians, our allies, the people of Kosovo demand that we cannot be neutral. Make no mistake about it, the Conservative Party supports Canada's NATO efforts thus far.

We must continue all efforts to seek solutions that would ensure that our soldiers and the people of Kosovo have a dignified way out of this horror. However, we now confront the reality that Canadians are facing the real possibility of battlefield deployment. Now is the time to consult before more Canadians are asked to put their lives at risk. Canadians have a proud record of international military service. It is imperative that we exercise proper judgment and discretion when sending our armed forces abroad.

It was a former Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, the leader of the Canadian government during the first world war, who said of a nation's military interventions "continuous consultation leading to concerted action". After all, it was Borden who during the great war worked tirelessly to ensure that Canada had significant military and diplomatic influence during that most infamous period of instability. Borden's efforts secured Canada a seat at the Versailles treaty table. His leadership helped define Canada's place on the world stage.

This government could learn from Borden's actions and from the efforts of our former government. Through this conflict we have seen yet again the callous disregard this government has for parliament and the people of Canada.

It appears Canadian forces were called to action without a proper plan. While we as a party fully support Canada's military actions thus far, it is the method and the means with which the government made this commitment which is offensive to parliament and to the Canadian democratic principles.

The choices at times like this are never simple. Innocent people were being killed before the intervention, as they are now. All avenues other than intervention were tried and failed. The question then became whether the world was to stand back and allow actions tantamount to mass murder of a people, the forced expulsion of

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people from their ancient homes and a pattern of aggression that threatened the stability of a region, a region whose instability has plunged the world into war before. With stakes this high, this real, it was incumbent upon NATO and Canada to act.

[*Translation*]

Inaction can always be justified, and the world did justify it in Rwanda, in Burundi and elsewhere. This is a precedent of which we cannot be proud, either on humanitarian grounds or as for regional stability.

[*English*]

Nor is this a precedent which should bind our hands in circumstances where the prospects of successful intervention might be stronger. There is a question of state sovereignty, but as Mr. Milosevic has demonstrated, there are a multitude of ways to violate the sovereignty of one's neighbours and one's people.

At the end of the day the question became whether the alliance which had tried other means should simply stand back and let events take their murderous course. We cannot turn a blind eye when such inhumane suffering is inflicted on a people by their own government.

History has demonstrated that it would have been preferable to act under the broader mandate of the United Nations. Canadians deserve to know in great detail how Canada used its unique influence as a member of the security council and as a close friend and ally of the United States of America to advance that option.

In the early 1990s the previous government adopted a two track policy with respect to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, working for peace but preparing for hostilities if diplomacy failed. That record clearly shows that from the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, the former government engaged in extensive diplomatic efforts designed to find a peaceful solution to that crisis. Those efforts included wide consultation in that region and elsewhere, promotion of the importance of the UN as the instrument of the world's response, urging the prompt withdrawal by Iraq and counselling prudence on the part of our allies.

Everything the previous government did, it did knowing that international peace and order was its overriding objective. And we did not fear consultation with parliament.

• (1700)

The Prime Minister will recall that in 1990 and 1991 during the crisis in the gulf, the Progressive Conservative government placed before the House substantive motions for a vote. The Prime Minister has said in his remarks that our soldiers deserve the support and respect of Canadians and of parliament. Surely the best way to achieve that unanimity is through a vote in the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister has put forward an amendment to a motion before the House seeking that the House of Commons give approval to the government prior to any commitment of ground troops. I ask rhetorically, will the Prime Minister seek such approval if the need for ground troops arises in this conflict? Our foreign policy should not shrink from the world around us.

The crisis also raises questions about Canada's role and influence in international affairs. Sadly, under the Liberal government we are paying a price for the gradual deterioration in Canada's capacity to act internationally.

Unfortunately, Canada now has a government that is shirking its responsibilities and leadership. This has led to an erosion in Canada's stature abroad. This is what causes us to question the nature of its multilateral efforts in the context of the Kosovo conflict.

We cannot forget that. Despite our huge investment in peace-keeping in the former Yugoslavia, Canada was not invited to be a member of the contact group negotiating with the various sides of the conflict in 1995.

In May 1995, when NATO bombed Bosnian Serb ammunition dumps in the vicinity of our peacekeepers, Canada was not advised of the situation in advance. Scores of Canadian soldiers were taken hostage in retaliation.

On the other hand, the policy of the former government was to work with the United Nations from the beginning to take more action both diplomatically and militarily. We firmly proclaimed our belief in collective security and responsibility in our commitment to help others. We did not follow the UN or NATO. We led them.

It is a sad spectacle when the current Prime Minister admitted in June 1995 in this House that Canada's international stature was so diminished under his leadership that the UN and NATO gave us no forewarning of air strikes in Bosnia.

A little over a year ago, the government was mounting the argument for Canadian participation in the military action against Iraq. The Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time admitted that Canada had not made any serious effort to achieve a consensus among the UN security council before such action because we ran the risk of establishing and defining a rift within the UN security council.

Pretending that problem did not exist was wrong and is highlighted today because that rift exists within the security council with respect to Kosovo.

This is further evidence that Canada has not maintained the political and diplomatic capability which was until recently a defining feature of Canada's role in the world.



It is still not clear, given the answers and the comments offered today by the Prime Minister, what diplomatic efforts the government undertook to resolve that rift.

[*Translation*]

When my party formed the government of Canada, we were successful in bringing the unique influence of Canada to play in order to carry out one of the mandates of the United Nations. Has the present government really fulfilled its role in persuading Washington, Moscow and Beijing to carry out one of the mandates of the United Nations?

[*English*]

How hard did the government try to use our unique position to persuade Washington, Moscow and then Beijing to achieve a UN mandate? Canadians have a right to know whether we mobilized our diplomatic and political influence with the same intensity in this case as we did so successfully in the gulf conflict.

When military action is proposed certain standards of conduct and criteria must be met. First, there should be clear political agreement on objectives.

Second, the scope of military action would have to be defined geographically and by capability. The government has deliberately chosen not to maintain the capability of the Canadian Armed Forces to live up to the roles we have traditionally played on the world stage.

Third, military action would have to be appropriate to the circumstances.

Fourth, the conditions that would precipitate a western military response would have to be clearly defined for all concerned in advance.

Finally, due regard must be given to the disengagement scenario prior to deeper involvement.

• (1705 )

As for this last point, the Government of Canada must have known, when it agreed to air strikes against Serb targets, that ground troops could well be necessary if we are going to finish what it started. The use of ground troops is never a first option, yet perhaps a necessary one when the exercise of measured force is required.

The Prime Minister and the government should have been more frank and truthful with Canadians at this time.

Canadians and their elected representatives have been told that the objectives of the NATO operation are to halt the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, force the Yugoslav military and paramilitary forces returning to Kosovo to withdraw, enable the refugees to return home in safety and force the Yugoslavian government to

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accept the Rambouillet peace agreement along with the NATO peacekeeping force.

Canadians are left with questions about NATO strategy: its short term objectives, its long term objectives and how its success will be measured. When will the NATO bombing campaign end? What is the criteria for any potential decision to employ ground troops? These are but a few of the many questions that need to be answered by the Prime Minister and the government.

Recent reports from the BBC indicate that ground troops have been contemplated. A spokesman for the American state department suggested that NATO might put aside its reluctance to use ground troops in a military role in Kosovo. A spokesman for the minister of defence in London, General Sir Charles Guthrie, acknowledged that NATO planners had discussed sending in ground troops.

Yesterday, U.S. Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, defined victory as the removal of Serb troops and the return of Kosovo refugees with the protection of an international peacekeeping force. As for the political status of Kosovo, he said that partition was out of the question but that there still had to be autonomy at the very least and the question of independence would have to be determined at a later date. He also suggested that even if Mr. Milosevic was ready to return to the negotiating table, he was uncertain whether that was still an option given the charges against him of crimes against humanity.

This is the American view. What is the Canadian government's view on these important issues? Canadians deserve answers.

The government refused to recall parliament while major decisions affecting the deployment of Canadian soldiers were being made. Where have we come as a nation and a parliament if we cannot set aside time to properly debate ideas for action to stem this crisis in Yugoslavia, a crisis that grips the entire world? We have taken this path before. Why can we not do it now when the lives of so many may be at stake?

My final words and those of my party are for the Canadian and NATO personnel and their families and the people of Kosovo who are directly affected by this tragedy and this conflict. While we in Canada cannot fathom the depth of the courage of our military personnel or sufficiently comprehend the suffering of the Kosovars, we will work in unity to ensure that this conflict is brought to a just end. The efforts of our forces and the suffering of the people of Kosovo must not be in vain.

It has been said that the history of the Balkans always repeats itself. Thus far these repetitions have been nothing but bloody and tragic. However, we must not assume that reconciliation in this region is still impossible. It is incumbent upon all of us in this parliament to make sure that Canada helps to end that chilling cycle

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of catastrophic unrest. The people of Kosovo must be free from tyranny and allowed to live in peace and freedom.

There is an honourable heritage to uphold Canada's intervention and a moral obligation as a peace loving nation. The Conservative Party will support all legitimate efforts to seek enforcement of lasting peace in Kosovo.

I would like to move an amendment to the amendment moved by the Reform Party that would read as follows:

And in the interim, this House supports the existing commitment of Canada to the NATO action to resolve the continuing tragedy in Kosovo and requires the government to regularly consult and inform parliament respecting this commitment and any changes thereto.

• (1710)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair will take the amendment to the amendment under advisement for a few moments.

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question for the hon. member.

He made reference to the fact that we have not consulted parliament. We debated this in November or October. I certainly remember being here on February 17, and we are debating it again today.

I just want to set the hon. member's mind correct. I was a defence critic when the gulf war began. One morning Canadians woke up to hear that Canadian forces had been committed to the gulf war while parliament was in summer recess. The House was not recalled.

He talks about a vote. Yes, there was a vote but considerably after the Canadian forces were committed. I remember that being a very major point. If my memory serves me correctly, the vote was on the UN resolution.

If we were to make public that we will quit bombing in say 5, 10 or 15 days, does the hon. member think this would really help NATO or would it help Milosevic?

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I also recall that period of time, although I certainly was not a member of this House.

The one thing I do know is that the government of the day did not make a commitment to send troops and then return them home when the fighting began. What it did do was consult with parliament in a real way, in a debate that mattered and a debate that led to a vote.

That is what members of this party and other members of the opposition have been calling for, a significant motion before the House that defines the action and allows parliamentarians to, at the

very least, have their say and input, to have it considered by the government before it takes a position. I agree that the timeliness of the vote is important.

Taking the hon. member's comments in their context, I hope this is an indication that the government is prepared to have a significant vote before any commitment is made to send ground troops into Kosovo.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, in the presence of the Prime Minister, to state, as our Conservative colleagues found out this morning, that there is a problem with consultations.

There is a real problem when it comes to consulting members of this parliament. These past two weeks we were promised we would be kept informed. The government promised it would keep us informed, which it has not done properly, and should do better and more often in the coming weeks.

I understand my Conservative colleague is a lawyer. He probably knows how to read the acts that would apply to the present situation. The National Defence Act, for which the minister is responsible, provides that the Governor in Council may place the Canadian forces on active service in consequence of any action undertaken by Canada under the United Nations Charter or the North Atlantic Treaty and not requiring parliament's intervention.

Is his party of the opinion that this provision should be amended so that every time we are considering sending troops—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the question is too long.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my learned friend for the comment. I certainly do not hold myself out as an expert in international affairs, but I do take his point. It is certainly something that might be examined as to modifying the existing act.

I want it to be very clear that we as opposition members are not asking asking to micromanage this intervention, this military action. We are asking for meaningful consultation and information that pertains to the serious questions that lead to the decisions the government is making.

• (1715)

The Prime Minister has indicated that he will do more to advise the House and we take him at his word.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the arguments the hon. member has been

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making of late about the need for parliament to be able to give the government a more specific mandate in the context of an explicit motion and vote at some point in the future should perhaps the government come to the view that it wants to deploy ground troops, for instance. I would caution the hon. member not to hang his hat too firmly when it comes to this on the behaviour of the previous Conservative government.

If my memory serves me right, we were well into the gulf war before we had the kind of thing the member is calling for. A lot of procedures that have made it tough for the opposition in this parliament and the last parliament, including the procedure used by the government against the hon. member today, were procedures brought in by that government. In terms of procedural contempt for parliament, his party has few equals and I would caution against self-righteousness in the matter.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I have great respect for his knowledge of the House, for his participation in debates and for his longstanding commitment to improve parliamentary procedure. In the context of setting up the parameters of this debate he referred quite appropriately to this as an ideal debate where there could be meaningful exchange.

Sadly that will end at 6.30 p.m. and there will be very few in the House to hear the comments being put forward. There will be very little in the way of meaningful exchange. There will be very few ministers present. The Prime Minister will not be here. That is the objective we have been trying to achieve with the assistance of some members of the opposition.

I can think of very few issues of greater importance that would lead the House not to have a debate, that would parallel the decision that must put our armed forces in harm's way in Kosovo. This is an instance where it should happen.

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know it is not appropriate to comment on when people are in the House, but it is important to say that the Prime Minister is here listening to the debate because he does care. He is here right now in the Chamber.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, now that all five political parties have spoken, it appears clear to me that there is a consensus to send ground troops into Kosovo under certain conditions. I would rather the debate be about whether or not Canadians are prepared to send ground troops into Kosovo, period. Sending Canadian soldiers to fight a war in Kosovo means that the Prime Minister and parliament would be prepared to accept that Canadian soldiers will be killed in action in Kosovo.

Before the Canadian government gets itself into a ground war, it should at least know how it will get itself out of a ground war in Kosovo. The Americans made the mistake in Vietnam of getting into a war they did not know how to get out of.

Is the member from the Conservative Party not concerned that a precedent has been set as a result of what is happening in Kosovo, that in future whenever any internal conflict takes place anywhere in the world wherein ethnic cleansing, murder and rape are taking place NATO will be required under the precedent—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I respect his opinion.

● (1720)

It is not the position of the Conservative Party that we are at that inevitable point where ground troops will be sent in. However I take the hon. member's question as to whether a precedent has been set and whether we are concerned about that. Certainly we are concerned.

I am afraid that there are instances in the world where conflicts are raging now and the UN or NATO has not intervened. Perhaps they should have. What happens, and it should happen, is that each individual conflict is examined and is given a great deal of thought before any military intervention takes place. I respectfully submit that is the way it should continue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair is prepared to rule on the admissibility of the proposed amendment. The Chair finds the amendment to the amendment to be in order and therefore the question is on the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. John Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Speaker earlier ruled that the amendment which was put by the official opposition was in order. It seems somewhat strange that a take note resolution before the House that will not be voted on can be amended.

I would simply ask for the authority under which amendments can be accepted to a matter before the House that will not be voted on.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sure the hon. member is aware that virtually any motion, except I believe an adjournment motion, put to the House is amendable. There may be a few others that are listed in the standing orders that are not but there are not many.

A motion, even on a take note debate, it seems to me is an amendable motion. It may be that the question is not put but that is in accordance with the rule adopted by the House in relation to this debate. Accordingly amendments are amendments. As long as they are relevant to the main motion and do not contradict the main motion and as long as they are not repugnant to it generally they are ruled to be in order.

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There is nothing offensive in the wording that has been proposed by the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough or by the Leader of the Opposition in his amendment. There is nothing contrary or repugnant to the main motion. They seek to amend it and clarify its terms. Accordingly the Chair has held them to be in order.

I will not cite an authority without looking for the hon. member, but I am sure if he looks at his standing orders and at Beauchesne's he will discover there is plenty of authority for amendments to motions. Indeed it is common practice.

**Mr. John Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a further point of order in light of your comments. Any member of the House who speaks on this matter would be entitled to move an amendment as long as it is consistent with the main motion. At the end of the day we could have 150 amendments to this take note motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No. There can only be a main motion, an amendment and a subamendment before the House at one time. Before another member could move a further amendment the subamendment would have to be disposed of.

**Mr. John Nunziata:** How do we dispose of it if we cannot vote?

**The Deputy Speaker:** You cannot. That is the short answer to your question.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

The grave events taking place in Kosovo have concerned the House for the last six months. The opposition has had every opportunity in a real way to contribute to the discussion and to the important decision making that has to be done. I find its complaints today to be absolutely groundless.

For example, on four occasions since last October the committee on foreign affairs and the committee on defence have met either jointly or separately to discuss the Kosovo issue. In addition there has been a series of detailed technical briefings by military and other officials. Even during the break, even while members were across the country in other locations, the committees came together a few days into the air campaign. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for International Cooperation and I came before the committee to talk about Kosovo.

• (1725)

Moreover, the House has debated the situation on two occasions prior to today in February. On last February 17 we considered our participation with ground forces in terms of peacekeeping operations. Once an agreement had been reached we discussed the 600 to

800 Canadian troops that would be involved in that peacekeeping mission.

Furthermore it is important particularly to note today that last October 7 we discussed the very kind of air action that is in fact now ongoing. I can remember. I looked at the notes. There was full participation and an understanding of what was at stake was discussed at that time.

We still hoped for a diplomatic settlement, but everybody in the House knew the consequences last October if we did not get one. As a result of the threat of NATO air strikes, at that time Mr. Milosevic agreed with Richard Holbrooke of the United States, the special envoy, on a set of conditions by which we would then be able to prevent any kind of air strikes. However Mr. Milosevic, true to the form that we have seen in the past, did not live up to his word. He continually broke his promises.

Over the months that followed an ever increasing level of violence against the Kosovars and the steadfast refusal of the Yugoslav delegation at Rambouillet to negotiate in good faith left us with very little choice but to resort to military force. Even then we took several months trying to bring about this diplomatic resolution, but diplomacy had run its course. We were in a race against time as the number of atrocities grew by the hour.

I could quote a lot of the things that members of the House said on that occasion, but the essential point is that members of the House recognize the gravity of the humanitarian catastrophe looming on the horizon and the need to resort to military means if diplomacy fails. The debate last October demonstrated that the policy of the government and the will of the House were one and the same. Our current actions in Kosovo reflect that consensus reached last October 7 in the House.

I assure all Canadians that our objectives are clear. We seek the immediate end to violence in Kosovo; the complete withdrawal of the Yugoslav forces; the unconditional and safe return of all refugees, a million of them; the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; and the establishment of a political framework under which the Kosovars can be appropriately governed. Those are the five conditions that were further endorsed today in the foreign ministers meeting in Brussels.

The NATO air campaign is now in its 20th day. All hon. members are aware that Canada has now doubled its initial contribution of six CF-18s for a total of twelve. Some 220 personnel are stationed in Aviano: pilots, technicians and people in many other support roles, all doing excellent work for Canada. There are 100 people involved in the AWACS missions flying out of Germany.

The decision to do all this was taken following close consultation with our NATO allies and careful consideration of how the air operation would be conducted.

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[Translation]

I can assure the House I have been in close contact with my NATO colleagues since the beginning of the crisis. Very recently I talked to my Italian and British counterparts, and on Saturday I met with Secretary Cohen in Washington.

[English]

Later this week I will be going to Brussels where I will meet with senior NATO officials. NATO's intensified air operations and Canada's additional commitment of aircraft are not signs that the campaign is failing to deliver results. NATO is engaged in a very deliberate and carefully planned air operation. The first phase of that operation was designed to degrade and neutralize Yugoslav's air defences. NATO has flown thousands of sorties, with only one aircraft loss.

● (1730)

The second phase of the operation began in the midst of the current campaign and it, along with the continued pressure on air defence, meant striking hard at the Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, the very people and the equipment that were inflicting the atrocities on the Kosovo population. Mr. Milosevic is doing everything he can to hide his forces and allude NATO aircraft.

Two conclusions should be drawn from these actions. First, our air campaign is having the intended effect. Second, we are reducing and weakening the capability of the Yugoslav forces to inflict their evil on the people of Kosovo.

Outside of Kosovo, NATO forces are striking at vital Yugoslav military infrastructure and other assets that allow his army and police forces to operate. In the space of these 20 days we have destroyed 50% of Yugoslavia's fuel reserves and have reduced its capacity to refine the remaining oil. As each day passes the price that Mr. Milosevic is paying for his hideous actions in Kosovo is rising and his military capability is diminishing.

This has always been our military objective and we are succeeding, but everyone must understand that it will take time to see this operation to its conclusion. A crisis of this dimension, a human catastrophe of this magnitude, cannot be solved in a few days or weeks. The important moments in human affairs are not for the impatient or for those with feeble convictions.

In addition to our military contribution to NATO, the Canadian forces are taking an active part in addressing the humanitarian tragedy that has resulted from the gruesome actions of the Yugoslav government.

[Translation]

We deployed two Hercules aircraft in Europe to help officials with the world food program to deliver much needed food supplies.

[English]

This follows the delivery of blankets last week by CF aircraft. Canadian forces bases are available for refugees if that should prove necessary.

The Canadian forces are playing an important role in NATO's military and humanitarian operations. The men and women who proudly wear the Canadian uniform are once again putting the moral convictions of Canadians into action. They are on the front line. They are facing the dangers and the challenges of a military operation.

Let there be no doubt where this government stands. It is not only the Canadian forces' operation, it is the will of this Canadian government. It is the will of our 18 NATO allies that have committed to this cause. We stand by our allies. As a nation Canada has always lived by certain international principles regarding peace, security and human rights. We stand by them as well.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated to the House and to the Canadian public that there are approximately 700 Canadian troops from the west who are preparing, in some form, to be stationed in Kosovo.

These questions beg to be asked. First, we would like to know what this government is actually doing. Can it tell us how it is preparing? What sorts of circumstances is it planning for? Is it readying itself for peacemaking, or is it just peacekeeping, or is it both? There is a difference between those two roles.

● (1735)

We need to know about the equipment that Canadians will be taking with them. Do they have what they need to get the job done? Will they be protected to the greatest extent possible by the use of that equipment? What other plans would the military enact to ensure that protection?

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to extend the time period for questioning the Minister of National Defence considering the important military component of this issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I do not know what the hon. member is proposing. How many minutes is he proposing to extend it by? Perhaps he could clarify that.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** An extra 15 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed to extend the time for an extra 15 minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, this should be of no surprise to the hon. member because we discussed this in the House on February 17.

This is relevant to the peacekeeping mission that was foreseen in the Rambouillet talks. We indicated at that time that between 600 and 800 personnel, approximately 700 if you will, would be deployed for that purpose. They would come from our base in Edmonton. They would be equipped with Coyote reconnaissance, one of the best, state of the art, armoured personnel carrier vehicles that we have, Griffon helicopters and other necessary equipment to carry out a peacekeeping mission.

They are, as our troops are expected to be, fully combat capable. They are able to deal with a range of conditions. The kinds of conditions we are talking about for their deployment are the very ones we talked about in the House on February 17, and that is as a part of a peacekeeping mission.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question for the Minister of National Defence.

I was present in October 1998, when we had a debate—as the minister will remember—and there were very few members in the House. Yet the government used that debate to claim it was entitled to take part in air strikes without a vote in this House.

What the opposition objects to when we are dealing with such important issues is that the debate should be followed by a vote. I would like to hear the minister's view on this.

My question, however, is this: Has Canadian military equipment been damaged during the 19 days of air strikes, and have Canadian or Quebec military personnel been injured or been harmed in any way?

[English]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, we are grateful that there have been no casualties and no injuries. The military equipment being deployed is the CF-18 jet fighters, 12 of them. They are used frequently in carrying out the air campaign. They are well equipped. They have precision guided munitions that have been used extensively when the weather has permitted.

I might add that that is an important factor. They do not want to release the munitions against the target unless they can verify the target visually because they want to ensure that they minimize any possibility of civilian casualties.

They have been able to carry out their missions quite well. They are well equipped, well trained and they have carried out a stellar performance for Canada in this regard.

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. minister if he could check and inform the House if the U.S. or any NATO partner is using A-10 Warthog jets with depleted uranium shells.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, I can only respond as I did when the question was asked during Oral Question Period today. I am not aware of any, but I would be pleased to inquire and advise the hon. member.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I simply want to ask the minister if the House of Commons will be officially convened to vote on a formal commitment of Canadian ground troops, because I have the impression that our international role has been neglected in this whole scenario.

I remember all the efforts made by the former Prime Minister—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sorry, but the hon. member's time has expired.

• (1740)

[English]

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton:** Mr. Speaker, this has been talked about extensively today and in question period. The Prime Minister has appropriately answered the question with respect to a vote.

However, let me say that if there were any substantive change in terms of our involvement in this matter, as I think it has been said time and time again, we would come back to the House for discussion.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the situation in Kosovo has a number of repercussions for Canada as a NATO member. One is the human tragedy of thousands of individuals so brutally forced out of their homes in Kosovo.

I remind members that the refugees did not leave their homes voluntarily, and that most of them want to return. And we see their despair daily.

As members know, Canada responded to UNHCR's appeal and set up the necessary infrastructure to take in 5,000 Kosovar refugees. This action was necessary because of the risks to which the refugees were exposed. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were forced to leave the region and all of them wanted to take refuge in neighbouring countries.

This unprecedented wave of refugees massed at the borders represented a risk bordering on the unacceptable. These people had been forced out of their homes and had already endured great

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suffering. That is why Canada joined with other countries and undertook to offer these refugees a safe haven.

Last Friday, the high commissioner, Mrs. Ogata, thanked those countries that had responded to UNHCR's appeal, but indicated to the international community that the planned program would be only an emergency solution to the problem of protection.

Mrs. Ogata stated clearly the position of the organization she heads, and I quote:

[*English*]

The majority of people should remain in the region to permit repatriation with security when the situation allows. Some individuals' resettlement would be appropriate to deal with special needs and family reunification.

[*Translation*]

There will therefore be situations where individuals needing special protection in order to be reunited with their families will have to be resettled in third countries, this time on a permanent basis. Decisions will be taken with the co-operation of international organizations specialized in this sort of intervention.

Canada's legislation makes provision for such situations. Already, our staff are in the region, ready to accept applications. This aid is beginning in the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia, with our international partners, and is continuing in Canada, with our local partners.

[*English*]

The situation in Kosovo remains volatile, but it has now evolved to the point where the refugees can remain in the area in relative security. Many members heard our ambassador, Raphael Girard, tell Canadians yesterday about the satisfactory conditions in five of the six main refugee camps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Conditions in those camps are improving to the extent that Canadian purchased toys have been distributed to some children. Food, water and health supplies are arriving in part through the efforts of the men and women of the Canadian forces and Canadian NGOs. Shelters are being constructed and these refugees have the level of protection that was fundamental to the decision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The situation, I repeat, is in constant evolution. Canada will continue preparations and maintain a state of alert should the situation change in the days and weeks to come. In the event the UNHCR decides to proceed with an emergency evacuation we are ready. Canada has a proud humanitarian tradition. Canadians are compassionate people who have historically come to the aid of those in need.

Should emergency measures become necessary the UNHCR will be a key player in identifying persons who are in need of

assistance, in deciding to which countries they should go and in providing the basic documents.

• (1745)

In addition to the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, the IOM, would play a key role in the registration and transportation of the refugees to Canada. Canada's capacity to respond to a major evacuation would be intimately tied to the structures that the UNHCR and the IOM are putting in place on the ground. I have every confidence that these organizations will succeed in their task.

Our partners at the Red Cross would play a critical role in any operation we might undertake. We must remember that many of these people are travelling from camps in which the Red Cross symbol appears on tents, trucks and food parcels. This recognizable symbol would be highly visible in the reception centres in Canada.

The Red Cross could also make its family messaging services available shortly to refugees through its international network. Red Cross officials assure me that they are ready to extend humanitarian services and that their personnel are standing at the ready. I am pleased to have the assistance of the Red Cross with its expertise in helping refugees from affected countries in Europe.

[*Translation*]

Our partnerships at various levels have been the key to success in this initiative. While the operation is led essentially by the Canadian government, the provinces have a crucial role to play, as is the case with many aspects of our refugee protection program.

We have daily contacts with provincial officials to solve issues of mutual interest and co-operation. I want to thank our provincial partners for their co-operation and for opening their doors to refugees.

I also want to thank the people in the communities around the military facilities that we are planning to use. They too have worked together and prepared to welcome refugees.

We are also continuing to work closely with NGOs whose expertise in the management of humanitarian crises is precious. Employees from my department have worked closely with employees from other federal departments who have shown dedication and flexibility in meeting the particular needs of refugees, while striving to improve the overall situation in Kosovo, and I want to thank them for that today.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the extraordinary generosity of Canadians, as our Prime Minister did earlier today. The toll-free line that we set up last week was flooded with calls. The offers of assistance that have been coming in steadily through this line since last Wednesday are simply extraordinary.

We have received more than 7,000 calls and 1,000 faxes. The assistance offered ranges from the large bedroom that the eldest daughter in a family is willing to make available to a family of

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refugees so they can sleep together to the free English lessons that a university student is willing to give.

This confirms my conviction that Canadians are compassionate people who are always willing to help those in need. Therefore, I want to thank all Canadians who have offered to help in so many different ways the refugees from Kosovo. We are sure that Canadians would open their arms and their hearts to make the refugees from Kosovo feel welcome in our country.

[*English*]

Canada is a caring society. Compassion is a strong element of our national character. The question of how best to respond to this crisis is one that we are answering at times as we go along. The situation is changing very quickly and could change again over the next few days, but I know that whatever happens in the coming days and weeks we have already witnessed a demonstration of Canada's humanitarian tradition in action within our home borders and in our homes.

I am satisfied that the Government of Canada and its many partners are ready to move quickly and effectively should the UNHCR renew its request to offer a safe haven to a large number of refugees. Furthermore, the UNHCR knows we are also ready to assist in individual cases of refugees who need protection in Canada. Our efforts are entirely consistent with the larger international effort in responding to the needs of refugees. As a Canadian I am proud that assistance has been offered to these people.

• (1750)

**Mr. Deepak Ohrai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Perhaps we could get unanimous consent to question the minister longer than just the five minutes allotted. Perhaps it could be extended to 10 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to extend the time for questions and comments by 10 minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister made an extremely important point in her speech that Canadians truly are very generous. They have offered to open their homes and their lives to refugees. That shows a generosity that is quite amazing in fact. It has left a very positive impression on me.

I have a couple of questions for the minister. In her speech just now and before I have heard the minister say that she will rely on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to make the decision on whether or not Canada accepts refugees. Is the minister allowing the United Nations to make that decision for Canada?

What process will be put in place to ensure that any refugees we choose will go through the proper security checks? There is some concern in that regard.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize the fear the Reform Party has of criminals all the time. We are speaking about people in need who were forced to leave their homes and their country. We are here to speak about the help we can give them.

It is clear that we will act in co-operation with the UNHCR. We have always done so in the past. When there is an international crisis we work with the UNHCR. It is the expert in the field. UNHCR will refer these people to our immigration officers and of course we will do some medical and security screening.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, here is my question for the minister.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are over 655,000 refugees abroad, but within Kosovo itself there are 800,000 displaced persons.

To your knowledge, are Canada and other countries able to help displaced persons inside Kosovo and is it enough to help refugees outside Kosovo?

When will we know whether the High Commissioner for Refugees will ask Canada to take in some refugees and how exactly do you intend to inform the population?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I ask the hon. member to address his comments to the Chair.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Mr. Speaker, we are certainly concerned also by the situation of those inside Kosovo. The only way to help these people is for international organizations, especially the High Commissioner for Refugees, to be allowed into Kosovo, which is not the case currently. This is why the international community is extremely concerned.

As far as the time frame to bring people here is concerned, we already have two immigration officials in the field. We even have a Canadian doctor over there with them, and individual references through the High Commissioner for Refugees have started.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to speak about some of the comments that were made earlier by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. I know that he and the Prime Minister are both students of history. He was referring to Robert Borden's comments that we must ensure parliament always has continuous and meaningful consultation.

As was asked by the member for Compton—Stanstead earlier in question period, has the Government of Canada made a commitment to NATO to send in ground troops? That question was asked



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of the Minister of National Defence but he did not answer it. Does she have any knowledge that commitment has been made by any member of cabinet or by the Minister of National Defence?

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** Mr. Speaker, I realize the question is for either the Prime Minister or the national defense minister, but I understand both my colleagues emphatically answered no to the question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it certainly is my pleasure to address the question of Canada's involvement in the crisis in and around Kosovo.

We have heard from the leader of the Reform Party that the official opposition is strongly supportive of Canada playing a role in bringing this humanitarian crisis to an end. Reform wants to see a rapid end to Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing. We want to bring stability to this troubled region as quickly as possible and as peacefully as possible.

This is why we support the NATO air strikes against Serbian military positions. This is why, if NATO deems it necessary, we will support the use of ground troops to enforce the resettlement of Kosovar Albanian refugees. Let me be clear. We stand united with NATO. We will not tolerate Slobodan Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing and we are prepared to crush his military until he stops.

Canada has several responsibilities in this crisis. We have responsibility to the innocent Kosovar Albanians who are being driven from their homes, forced out of their country, stripped of their identity and in many cases killed simply because of their ethnicity. Canadians will not tolerate that.

In the past couple of days two polls have shown that a majority of Canadians want NATO and Canada to take decisive military action against Milosevic. Canada also has a responsibility to our NATO allies. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies to demonstrate to Milosevic our resolve to end his hostilities against Kosovar Albanians. Canada also has an historic responsibility to restore peace through diplomatic means. We stress that attempts to bring a diplomatic end to this crisis should continue in spite of the ongoing military action.

We also have a responsibility to our troops and their families. We must ensure that any decision to engage Canadian forces has been carefully thought through as a clear definition of Canada's role and has a well defined goal.

I do not believe the motion we are debating has a clear defined goal when it comes to any involvement of the military. As the defence critic, however, I focus on the question of Canada's current military commitment to the NATO effort in Kosovo and the possibility of future ground force commitments in coming days or weeks.

I disagree with the government's unwillingness to address the issue head on. The use of ground forces is a very real possibility and Canadians deserve to know that parliament has had a full debate on this question. I understand the strategic imperative of not officially committing to ground troops yet, but that does not preclude a theoretical discussion of the issue.

The government has a responsibility to put all the facts on the table. The official opposition will continue to press the government on this point, as it will on the need for a vote should the issue become more paramount in the very near future.

Canadians should be proud of their troops. They have been carrying out a very difficult mission in Yugoslavia, far more in the last two weeks than previously. They have shown a tremendous degree of professionalism and confidence. On behalf of the official opposition I congratulate them on a job well done.

Since the first hints of NATO military action surfaced I have been in favour of Canada lending its support to the efforts to bring Milosevic's military to its knees.

• (1800)

Now, after several months of continued atrocities against ethnic Albanians, the need for more military action is even more clear. However, the massive refugee problem has likely changed the measures we need to take to ensure stability in the region. NATO military planners originally thought air strikes would be sufficient to bring Milosevic to heel. Ground troops would then have gone in only after a peace agreement was reached.

While it is too early to tell, it looks as though ground forces may be necessary before a peace agreement is reached in order to ensure the resettlement of over 500,000 ethnic Albanians who have been driven out of Kosovo. I stress that I think it is still too early to tell whether such action will be necessary. I also want to point out that it is up to NATO to determine what the military action would be at that point. That being said, we as members of parliament have a duty to discuss the possibility of a Canadian military contingent being sent to Yugoslavia as part of a NATO ground force.

As I said earlier, our position is clear on this. We will support NATO's decision to send in ground troops if they determine that is what is necessary to achieve our common objectives, that is, the resettlement of Kosovar refugees and an end to ethnic cleansing.

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We called for this debate for two reasons. First, we believe parliament should be consulted before Canada participates in any escalation of NATO military action in Yugoslavia. Second, we know what our position is. We now want to hear what the government's outline is on its position.

There are a number of obvious questions raised by this crisis that need answers. Given the refugee problem has increased exponentially, the military mission may have changed or may be about to change and the objectives of this government may be changing to a degree. We want to know that.

We would like to know if this has changed the government's goals. Has the government changed its objectives since the beginning of the campaign? Furthermore, how far is the government willing to go to achieve its objective, that is the resettlement of Kosovar Albanians?

Are there projected timelines for Canadian participation? Are there anticipated roles for our troops? Will they fulfil reconnaissance, engineering, supply, medical, or combat roles? What specific preparations are our troops undergoing in anticipation of joining a possible NATO ground force both before and after a peace agreement is reached?

These questions beg to be answered. In spite of the fact that there is no commitment, it is incumbent upon government to be able to deal with questions such as those being presented here.

Are our troops outfitted with the equipment they need to do the job? I know there is always a role for Canadian troops in any theatre, but the more dangerous the situation is, the more high intensity of the combat area, the greater the needs of any military troops entering that field. What kind of equipment will our troops have when they walk right into that conflict, if they ever do walk into that conflict on the ground?

The auditor general has expressed concerns about Griffon helicopters, Coyote reconnaissance vehicles and other Canadian military equipment. Have these concerns been addressed?

Sending equipment and troops into this conflict also raises important questions about the new role of NATO and its role in protecting international stability but I feel these would be more appropriately raised at another time. Some of these questions would include an examination of the causes of Canada's diminishing role in international military decision making, an examination of NATO's changing role as an international police force and an examination of the command and control structure of NATO and how Canada fits into this framework. In the meantime, I want to stress that as a demonstration of our support for Canada's commitment to NATO allies, Reform remains committed to the present NATO course of action.

• (1805)

Let me elaborate on some of my earlier questions for the government. Has the government changed its objective in pursuing

military action in Kosovo? Ending ethnic cleansing and resettling refugees are my main reasons for supporting NATO action. Has the government's role changed? I need to know from the government that we are on the same wavelength on this issue. Does the government have other plans? Does the foreign affairs minister have another agenda? Does he want to take military action a step further and try to establish a new independent Kosovar state?

We should know these things before more Canadian troops are committed. What are the expected time lines? Does the government have any idea how long Canadians will be committed? Does it expect that it will be a short engagement, say a few months, or is this something that could escalate into a timeframe of a decade?

All of this depends on the government's goals. Does the government have a particular role in mind for our troops? Will our troops be forming front line combat roles, or will they fulfil other important functions, for example in communications, supply, engineering or medicine? These are all roles which Canadian forces members have experience in. Canadians want to know if the government already has an idea how our troops will fit into the overall NATO plan.

I previously put a question to the minister after his presentation. We do know that around 700 Canadian troops in the west are preparing for engagement in Kosovo. We would like to have the government tell us how they are preparing. What sorts of circumstances are they planning for? Are they readying themselves for peacemaking, peacekeeping or both? There are obviously huge differences between the two roles.

We need to know about the equipment the Canadians will be taking with them. I understand there are some Griffon helicopters. I do not know how many. Are they being deployed and for what purpose? Do they have what they need to get the job done? Will they be protected to the greatest extent possible?

The men and women of the Canadian forces are well trained. They are brave beyond words. I have talked to many international soldiers in that regard about some of the circumstances under which they have served and which those of even greater military might may not have even ventured into. They are very professional. I want to be assured that the government knows what it is doing.

My sense is that for the time being at least we are all pretty much on the same wavelength. I would be surprised if there is a great gulf between the government and the opposition so far on this issue.

I ask these questions because it is crucial that we all spell out precisely what we have in mind before we get into the crisis any further. It is only fair not only for the opposition but for the Canadian public as well as the military. We owe that to Canadians in general. Most of all we owe it to the members of the Canadian forces who will put their lives on the line to carry out the government's orders.

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History has shown that the threat of massive military action has frequently been the very thing that brings aggressors to the bargaining table. I think we all hope that this will be a similar case.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** This is a unique experience, Mr. Speaker. I get to ask the defence critic a question.

I first want to preface my remarks by saying that I do very much appreciate the praise he gave to our troops, the support for the NATO action and for the action of this government in support of NATO.

I want to also assure him that there are no commitments. He was concerned that there might be commitments beyond those that have been publicly announced or those that have been discussed in the House. I can assure him that is not the case.

• (1810)

With respect to how long this might take, we are into a situation where it is not a question of end date, it is a question of end stage. It is a question of being able to achieve the successful return of the Kosovars and a peaceful and secure atmosphere in Kosovo.

I want to ask the member a question. He suggested that perhaps we should have a discussion, I think he said a theoretical discussion, in this House, on what if we did get into a situation where ground troops might be deployed prior to a peace agreement. Given the hon. member's comments with respect to NATO and solidarity with NATO, would that not be the place to start? After all, if our NATO allies do not think there should be any change, then obviously Canada would not be out of step with its NATO allies, would it?

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his questions.

I certainly agree that is the place to start. If the minister recalls throughout my entire presentation, I alluded to that point time and time again.

The debate on this topic is an issue that involves more than just a commitment of ground troops. It involves a commitment of an entire parliament with the information reaching the entire population of Canada. What we on this side of the House have sought to do is to keep people informed and have the full support of the House of Commons through a vote on that commitment, should it ever arise. That was our point right from the beginning.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two quick questions.

It seems to be assumed that in the event that some type of peace agreement is arrived at that Canada can take off its war hat and put on its peacekeeping hat. Would the member not agree that that would be somewhat difficult and one could possibly expect the Yugoslav government of Slobodan Milosevic not to accept some of those participants in the bombing to become peacekeepers?

The second question I have for the hon. member is assuming that Canada does commit ground troops, which I think would be sheer madness, what would the exit strategy be? Americans went into southeast Asia, into Vietnam, thinking it would be of short duration. Some 15 or 20 years later, they surrendered after 65,000 Americans were killed.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Mr. Speaker, the member speaks of an exit strategy. That is a major concern for me.

If the member wants to compare it to Vietnam, he can of course see that the height of political interference into a commitment made by their country impacting directly on the military. The military could not do the job it was assigned to do because of the very political interference that we hope to avoid here. If the military is assigned to do a job, it should be given a certain amount of freedom to accomplish that particular job and make sure that it is done effectively.

For Canadian troops to enter into some sort of a zone where there is a threat to them, unfortunately we do not have the capability of extraction. We have to rely very much on the presence of our allies to do that. I would suggest that there would be a need for a lot of support by our allies to put Canada in a role that would be most suitable for them.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the member had to say. We know he has the interests of the armed forces very much at heart.

With regard to his emphasis on a vote on some or other fairly hypothetical aspect of this exercise, I wonder if he would give us some thoughts about that. It seems to me that we are engaged in an exercise that has been going on now for some years in which we are increasingly putting pressure on Mr. Milosevic with a view to getting him to back down and to allow the people of Kosovo to go home. That exercise is partly psychological, it is partly political, it is partly economic sanctions and it is partly military. The military side is partly threats and partly some of the reality which we are facing now.

• (1815)

Does the member seriously think that to commit ourselves well in advance on a hypothetical question affects the effectiveness of the strategy that we are engaged in?

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**Mr. Art Hanger:** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing hypothetical about the democratic process. We in the Reform Party simply put it to the government that if the issue of committing troops comes up a vote be taken in the House. What will that do? It will substantiate in the minds of the Canadian public and politicians, as well as of our troops, that parliament is behind them. There is nothing hypothetical about that. We are talking about the democratic process. It is an opportunity to support the action, whatever it may be.

That was all that was put to the minister and the Prime Minister in the form of questions today during question period. It was nothing more, nothing less.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the defence critic for the official opposition, said that he would support the actions of NATO, and the minister also suggested should it not be enough that NATO supports this action.

When the member says it is important for Canada to follow the lead of NATO, is it not equally important that Canada be involved in the process within NATO? We have no real indication that Canada was intimately involved in making this decision in the first place.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Mr. Speaker, Canada's commitment to NATO goes back many decades and we have certainly had our periods of greater influence in that organization.

The Minister of National Defence could probably answer this question in a much more definitive way, but my concern is that Canada's influence within that organization is not as great as it used to be. Unfortunately we are not always at the military negotiating table as we should be.

We have the opportunity, as a country, to be more influential, but there have been philosophical changes in the way this government looks at our military and its influence in the world. In fact, it is an influential entity. There is much more that we could offer and I would suggest that diminishes our influence within the NATO circles.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the Reform member believe NATO should play a humanitarian role, as it is doing now, since in this conflict its role has obviously been not only to deliver air strikes, but also humanitarian aid to refugees in countries next to Kosovo?

[English]

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Mr. Speaker, the member asked whether I think NATO should be involved in a humanitarian role. I believe that whether it be military action or specific assistance, such as aiding in the distribution of food and other humanitarian actions, both should fit into the role of NATO. One cannot be done without

the other in many respects. If it means having to move certain kinds of aid through a war torn area or to a war torn area, NATO has the power to assist, to protect and even to help distribute supplies. It certainly would have the power, as far as the military entity is concerned, to protect refugees who have no means of protecting themselves.

• (1820)

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Minister for International Cooperation I want to give the House an update on the measures taken by Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency to provide humanitarian assistance to the desperate people fleeing Kosovo.

Two weeks ago on March 30 we approved \$10 million in humanitarian assistance for Kosovar refugees. We wasted no time to put it to work. Within 24 hours a \$2.5 million cash contribution was on its way to the UNHCR. Three days after the announcement the first shipment of relief supplies left Canada, responding to requests by the UNHCR for blankets so that some refugees would at least be safe from the cold.

Last week on April 7 I approved \$5 million in food aid. This \$5 million will cover both the purchase of Canadian and other food supplies and the cost of shipping them in and around the region on national defence and commercial flights. In a few days a shipment of Canadian fish will be sent to the area. This is part of our response to requests by the World Food Programme. We are making the most of their expertise in delivering appropriate relief to refugees in times of crisis.

These announcements were not the first demonstration of Canada's support to the people of the region. Just over \$3 million had been provided in the past year for humanitarian assistance. Another \$3.85 million was provided for the Kosovo verification mission carried out by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Some members of the verification mission are now supporting humanitarian efforts. For example, civilian observers are helping to register refugees in the camps.

To date we have committed \$22 million to the crisis in Kosovo. We continue to monitor the situation to see how we can further respond to the current crisis and how we can contribute to reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts in the future.

I was remiss when I began my remarks. I meant to say that I will be splitting my time with one of my colleagues.

[Translation]

As we all know, the refugees' situation has reached tragic proportions. We are all horrified by the images we see on television and in the papers. By the tired and desperate faces tortured by hunger and by the cold. By the accounts of executions and torture.

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And we think of the children who have witnessed scenes of unbearable violence.

We are there to help with their immediate needs, but we do not forget that they will need more services—such as psychological counselling—to get over this ordeal in the long run. We are already in touch with UNICEF, whose work we have supported for the children of Bosnia.

Faced with a humanitarian disaster of such magnitude, Canada is stepping in to give some hope to these people, who have been taken away from their home, their job, their family and their whole life. In all this show of solidarity, let us not forget the compassion shown by the people of neighbouring countries, those who are welcoming so many refugees into their homes no matter what their situation is.

No one would have thought, not so long ago, that they would have been drawn into such an aberration. These refugees can count on our compassion and our humanitarian assistance. As we respond to the alarming situation of the thousands streaming across the borders, let us not forget those who have not made it across, those who are still in Kosovo and in Serbia.

I am particularly concerned by the information we are getting about their situation. It is impossible to obtain accurate information, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has not yet gained access.

• (1825)

I call on all those involved directly or indirectly to help the International Red Cross provide assistance to affected communities.

Right now, information is sketchy and sometimes contradictory. We are hearing about thousands of people trapped in the mountains. We are also hearing about Serbs fleeing Kosovo and going into Serbia and Montenegro. We are even hearing about massacres, although we are unable to verify this. Part of the funds I announced will serve to answer the appeal by the International Red Cross.

To date, Canada has provided \$22 million. We are obviously following developments closely and are prepared to do more. Eventually, we will also contribute to peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in the region.

And let us not forget the generosity shown by Canadians. Calls are pouring in from Canadians responding to requests to help these refugees going through an unbearable ordeal. I want to extend my warmest thanks to them, here, today.

[English]

We are proud to do our part in what must be an international effort. Canada is one player. Let me point out that our approach is

true to our commitment to working not only one on one in bilateral settings, but also as a team player in multilateral settings.

In this case we are making sure that our contribution has the maximum impact by working closely with the people and organizations already in the field. These organizations, such as the UNHCR and the World Food Programme, are closest to the needs of the refugees. They have been monitoring the situation and providing assistance in difficult circumstances; not just in the last few weeks, but for months, from the onset of Milosevic's ethnic cleansing campaign. These organizations have our full support and admiration for the work they have done in appalling conditions.

Team work is also crucial within Canada. Immediately after announcing our humanitarian assistance package I met with Canadian NGOs to ensure that Canada's efforts made the best possible use of their readiness and experience.

We are fortunate to count on such partners as the Canadian Red Cross, CARE Canada, World Vision, CECI and many other Canadian relief organizations. They are coming forward as we speak with proposals to provide humanitarian assistance in their area of expertise. We are assessing these proposals and will soon announce how they will complement ongoing efforts.

We will continue to adapt our assistance to the situation. Members can be certain that Canada, through CIDA, will still be there when the time comes to help the region pick up the pieces and build the foundation for a lasting peace. Even now we are in contact with other donor countries and multilateral organizations. Let us not forget that when the military intervention has concluded, when the security situation is stabilized, our work with the international community will continue.

As we work to rebuild peace and stability in the region the role of the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia will be of critical importance. Canada has been a lead supporter of the tribunal. To date CIDA has provided over \$2 million to this tribunal. We are committed to ensuring that the tribunal will be fully effective in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis.

We were there with humanitarian assistance and observers before. We are responding to the basic needs of refugees now. We stand ready to consider reconstruction and peacebuilding in the future.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is very happy to see that the minister has responded with immediate aid to alleviate the suffering that has taken place, which, as we have seen on our television screens, is horrific. I also thank the minister for having contact with the NGOs.

• (1830)

We have already spent \$22 million in trying to alleviate suffering. When the minister of immigration announced that 5,000

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refugees would be coming in, the estimated cost was over \$100 million. It is understandable that the High Commission for Refugees has said that the Kosovar refugees should stay within the region.

What does the hon. minister anticipate? Is she satisfied with the way things are going and, if not, how much more does she think Canada can commit to aid and ensuring that the refugees have at least a reasonable standard of living in those regions?

**Hon. Diane Marleau:** Mr. Speaker, the commitment that was made by the minister of immigration was the cost to receive these refugees for a certain period of time. It was just an estimate. To date we have responded to requests from UNHCR and from the World Food Program and will continue to do that.

I cannot say how much more it will cost. It all depends on how long the conflict lasts, what the conditions are, and how soon the refugees can go back. We are prepared to respond to all requests that come to us and to do our fair share as a member of NATO, as a country that cares and wants to help these people.

Over the next few months as the situation progresses members will hear more and more announcements. I know we will be doing more than we have done so far.

**Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this debate. It gives us a chance to reassess the situation since what we are facing is political failure, humanitarian failure and now military failure in the area. Bringing refugees over as they are undocumented would be a nightmare. They live in a terrible purgatory.

Is the minister willing to put as much money and effort into humanitarian success as has been put into bombs being dropped on innocent civilians both in Yugoslavia and Kosovo? Both of those peoples should know that we support them in every way we can, but we cannot allow a humanitarian failure when our objective was to prevent it.

**Hon. Diane Marleau:** Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to do everything possible to work with the other countries involved to ensure that the people, those refugees, have some care, have some security and have some chance of having a decent life.

It is not an easy task but together we are making a difference. My reports indicate that for the most part the camps are now better organized. Food is getting to the people. Freshwater is getting to the people. It is always a challenge to continue to meet the demands of these refugees. It will be an even bigger challenge when the day comes and we have to help them return to their land. We are prepared to help them at that point with reconstruction, as we were prepared to help when Hurricane Mitch struck in Central America. Canada will definitely do its share as a caring nation.

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of International Co-operation about the co-ordination of these efforts.

We have heard from the minister of immigration and the minister of defence today. I have had calls to my office from constituents offering to help, to volunteer. I am wondering if the minister could spend a couple of minutes answering my question. I know there is a 1-800 number, but what advice would she give to Canadians who want to open their hearts and help?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am afraid the Minister of International Co-operation will have to take less than a couple of minutes.

**Hon. Diane Marleau:** Mr. Speaker, my suggestion to these people is that they contact the many organizations listed on our website. They are the people we work with who are present in the area. Also, as much as possible, if there are donations, that they be in cash rather than in kind. It is better for us because it is extremely costly to transport things to the region. We only transport those things that are asked for. We try to get the best price for everything.

• (1835)

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the weight of the words spoken today in the Chamber must not be diminished in any way by the participants in this debate.

As politicians we might at times engage in rhetoric that resonates with lofty ideals or would be aspirations, but when we debate the committing of Canadian lives to an action as grave as the conflict in the Balkans it is incumbent on each of us to weigh heavily the views we express, the words we employ, the actions we promote, for we are inputting a decision making process with grave implications for the present and future of the international community and for the jurisprudence which encompasses the actions of sovereign states.

That is so irrespective of whether we endorse or question the continued involvement of this country in the battle to alleviate the suffering of the people of Kosovo.

We are witnessing intense images of horrendous suffering by the Kosovar people. The information available and the intelligence gathered indicate that President Milosevic is engaged in wholesale efforts to ethnically cleanse Kosovo of the large majority of Albanian muslims. He is doing so in the most vile manner, utilizing barbaric methods that defy imagination and contravene the conventions of war. The result of these atrocities has led the member states of NATO to do all possible to protect the Kosovars and prevent this tyrant from attaining his goals.

The discussion in the media and elsewhere has queried the role of NATO in this action instead of the United Nations. While the

response has openly acknowledged that Russia and China would have vetoed and therefore forestalled unacceptably a UN military action, we must consider the ramifications of the alternate route we have employed.

As a collective security organization NATO should respond defensively and not offensively, but events in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have twice provoked the intervention of NATO to protect its citizens from their unscrupulous leaders.

The argument that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a sovereign state is not to be taken lightly but compels us to consider, as I stated at the outset, whether a state's claim to sovereignty is sufficient to allow that state to engage in actions against its people which contravene the rule of law and deny the very basics of human security.

At what point does Canada and the countries with which we have formed alliances decide that sovereignty is no shield from responsibility, that the very *raison d'être* for a sovereign state is its obligation to provide for the well-being of its citizens.

Sovereignty cannot be used as an excuse to permit an atrocity or to engage in ethnic cleansing that borders on genocide. When a country engages in such activities the analogies of history intrude. We are compelled to risk acting outside the precepts of international law as it has to date been applied and take the action we have engaged in thus far, and actions that may be proposed, to stop the possible destruction of a people.

We cannot continue to be baffled by the definitions of the past. Nor can we fail to heed the past and like Chamberlain in 1938 believe that monsters like Hitler and Milosevic can be appeased and peace in our time purchased. It cannot because they will break every value we hold basic and every human norm we hold as minimal.

We are by the very definition of our democratic societies compelled to do all that is possible and effective to assist the people over whom they hold power.

• (1840)

Let us recognize the turn in the road we have taken. The cold war is no more and the relative security that a two bloc world and a nuclear umbrella provided is likewise no more. We have entered a considerably more destabilized international landscape. We are today debating the Baltics, a region of Europe that has rarely enjoyed any long term stability and has frequently been the centre of racial foment and hostilities.

We must look very seriously at the consequences of this military action. Are we redefining our foreign policy strategies? Are we

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motivated, as Henry Kissinger might contend, by the compelling need to be partners with our allies to preserve equilibrium? Are we moving toward an unqualified support for ethnic self-determination as promoted by Woodrow Wilson? The implications of supporting these principles either alone or within coalitions such as NATO are far reaching and of considerable consequence.

We move into an uncharted legal landscape on the international plane, a landscape of foreboding future entanglements with no clear exit strategies. While the humanitarian dimension of the Kosovo quagmire is paramount, the legal precedent of this engagement will survive after the conflict and our remedy are concluded.

The Canadian government's intention to further the goal of human security at the security council and within our bilateral and multilateral alliances is legitimate from every perspective. It is the essential component that African leaders like President Konnare of Mali have defined as vital to the economic and social development of the wartorn countries of that continent.

The violation of human security in Kosovo is unacceptable. The total lack of regard for the rule of law is unacceptable. One had merely to watch in astonishment last week on Canadian television as Milosevic's henchman Arkan Raznatovic told viewers that he had no concern over Louise Arbour's charges against him of horrendous war crimes as he refused to accept the legitimacy of the international court and the War Crimes Tribunal. These are leaders for whom power is the arbiter, not the law. As Hitler demonstrated, in the world of diplomacy a loaded gun is often more potent than a legal brief.

Milosevic's reign of terror in Kosovo did not just precede the peacemaking efforts at Rambouillet by a matter of months. I was in Belgrade and Sarajevo nine years ago with the Canadian Bar Association. We were hosted by Yugoslavian lawyers. In Belgrade I met a woman lawyer who through great personal courage, I learned, acted for the Albanian Kosovars and did so often through the vehicles of the international jurists and Amnesty International.

She related incidents of chronic discrimination and denial of human rights. She described a visit there as a visit to the 15th century and despaired of anything but a steady worsening of their plight. We have witnessed such a decline culminating in the horrors we are now debating. There comes a time when we too take some risks in coming to the Kosovo defence.

The decisions before us cannot be relished and seem almost contrary to every precept I hold integral. Thirty years ago many of us fought not to engage an enemy but to halt a war that could not meet the bar for a *bellum justum* by any acceptable definition. As a young graduate student in 1966 in Halifax I carried a placard in Joe Howe Park, a little uncomfortable with this new role but convinced as we all were that the war in Vietnam, predicated as it was on a

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theory of containment and dominoes and as flawed strategically as it was bankrupted morally, had to end and such jingoistic ventures never embarked on again. As Dylan maintained, God was on no warrior's side.

The times were to have changed but the horrendous suffering we are seeing in Kosovo is witness to the fact that much has not changed. The people of the international community must accept and promote the application of force in containing a demagogue like Melosevic who knows no bounds and knows no morality.

• (1845)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to what my colleague said. I was quite moved by many of the comments she made. I know her personally and I think she put her point of view forward very well.

When she started her comments, she said that we have to be very careful as to what we say and to make the right decision here. Would she not think it is right for parliament to debate and for parliamentarians to be held responsible by their constituents if in the future, not now but in the future, Canada is going to commit ground forces, its soldiers, in the war? Does she not think it is the right of parliament and parliamentarians to debate and vote on that issue?

**Ms. Aileen Carroll:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for his question. While I value his point of view, I believe we must contain ourselves to the question at hand, which is to engage in a debate on the action that is before us, on that action that is being taken.

Indeed the war, like other wars, could lead to new steps and at that time it must come back to parliament for debate. However whether or not Canada and NATO allies will indeed send in ground forces is not the issue today, but rather the bombing that has been explained and brought forward to the House is to be debated and considered by all of us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious how very moved my colleague across the floor is.

Recent opinion polls indicate that women are less prepared than men to accept war, even as a means of settling differences, as is the case at present.

Under what circumstances would my colleague consider a war to be just?

[English]

**Ms. Aileen Carroll:** Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. It is indeed a question I considered as I looked up into the galleries

today and saw the young people who were here to observe their representatives debate a critical issue.

One could spend a long time as my learned colleague knows in a discussion of what constitutes a just war. From my remarks I have not only brought forward the amount of thinking that was necessary for me in preparing to speak today, but also the analysis I believed necessary before I could stand in the House and say that the evil we are observing and the terror being imposed upon a people is at such a level that we are justified in responding with force and with military might.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, this debate is definitely not a theoretical one, because a number of members of this House have relatives in the Canadian armed forces. That is why this matter must be addressed most seriously.

This reminds me of all the negotiations in which the former Prime Minister was involved at the time of the Gulf War, in which the United Nations was finally led to a more concerted action.

It is our opinion that, with what is going on in Kosovo at the present time, Canada's international role is not an optimum one. It is our impression that we are somewhat at the beck and call of other NATO members when it comes to decision making, and I find that a pity.

In order to reassure us before there is any direct ground force involvement—since it is the children of all of us who will be called upon to go over there—I would like to ask my colleague how she perceives the decision making process. Does she see a debate in the House of Commons with a specific vote on a very specific question? Are we going to commit our young people to a ground intervention in Kosovo?

• (1850)

[English]

**Ms. Aileen Carroll:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

We are members of NATO. NATO is a collective security. A collective security is an association of states. This one in particular works through discussion and works through participation by all members in the decisions taken.

Article 5 of NATO makes clear and puts forward that if any one of the 19 members is attacked, such action will result in all 19 members coming to that member's defence. This is not a defensive action, but still the logistics and the role that Canada plays as one of those 19 members is such that we too are very much a part of the decision making process. We are equal with the other states in bringing our views to the decisions.



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[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address this House once again, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, during the debate on the government's motion asking that this House take note, and I quote:

—of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo that leads to the safe return of the refugees.

So far in this debate, we have had few answers to our questions. Yet, Canadians and Quebecers expect the government to provide answers to our questions, because they feel concerned by the crisis in Kosovo and because the Liberal government has only provided them with very limited and fragmented information.

Incidentally, during a speech delivered at McGill University's law faculty on Thursday, April 8, Canada's former ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, Yves Fortier, did not hesitate to criticize the Prime Minister for his lack of transparency regarding Canada's position and action in the Kosovo conflict. We endorse that criticism, and the government must listen and change its attitude.

Like all the other governments of the Atlantic alliance, the Government of Canada is probably uncomfortable admitting that it underestimated the crisis in Kosovo and particularly Slobodan Milosevic's genocidal intentions. These governments do not seem to have learned history's lessons, otherwise they would know that the attitude of the Serb leader and of his security forces toward Kosovars is quite similar to their attitude toward Croatians and Bosnians, and to that of other political leaders—do we have to name them?—toward populations whose presence on their territory was deemed undesirable.

Like its allies, this government did not accurately assess Milosevic's strategy. It allowed itself to be dragged along by events, essentially reacting by resorting to air strikes, while pretending not to be considering a ground military option to end the exodus of the Kosovar people, to check the ethnic cleansing and to prevent a new genocide.

The about-face of the Minister of National Defence on the need to sent troops is the most deplorable example of the improvisation and lack of leadership of the Government of Canada in this conflict.

Today, after 19 days of air strikes and a massive exodus of Kosovars, the government has still not answered the most basic question. Must it consider sending in ground troops to put an end to such an exodus, to the resultant ethnic cleansing and, especially even more, to prevent the genocide of the Kosovar people?

We put this question when ministers Eggleton and Axworthy appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and

throughout our interventions of the past 10 days. We have once again called the government on this question today.

• (1855)

Will the Prime Minister and his ministers be continuing for long their silence on this basic issue or will they consider that public opinion, both Canadian and Quebec, which, we learn, is prepared to support intervention by ground troops, is now entitled to an answer on this issue?

Intensifying bombing did nothing to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Furthermore, if Milosevic persists, he will be able to keep Kosovo, having emptied it of its Albanian inhabitants. Even in the case of a campaign of air strikes in which all Serbian vehicles and the entire Serbian war machine were destroyed, Milosevic would still be the one occupying Kosovo, on his own.

Therefore air strikes have their limits. A plane cannot differentiate a Serb soldier from a Kosovar passer-by. Moreover, the closer to the ground our planes are flying, the more dangerous it becomes for them. But again Milosevic believes NATO will not send in ground troops to ferret him out, and he is playing a game of attrition.

But this is not the only issue the Bloc Québécois is interested in. My party believes Canada has not used all the means at its disposal to find a solution to the conflict in Kosovo. Beside taking part in the air strikes, Canada should have diversified and still can diversify its actions to put as quick an end as possible to ethnic cleansing and, I will say it again and I cannot overemphasize it, to prevent the genocide of the Kosovar people.

Until now, the minister of Foreign Affairs has not seen fit to use Canada's seat on the UN Security Council to have the UN play a role in this conflict. Even though his participation today in Brussels in the meeting of the foreign affairs ministers of the Atlantic alliance is aimed at evaluating the present and future action of NATO, should he not now sponsor, within this forum and the United Nations, a new formula to deal with the political problem created by the conflict in Kosovo, called "a war without images" by some.

If the Rambouillet accords are no longer relevant, should Canada not bring to the security council a proposal aimed at putting Kosovo under the protection of the United Nations pending a negotiated settlement of the crisis?

If it is as concerned with the rule of law as it purports to be, Canada should also ask the International Criminal Tribunal's chief prosecutor, Mrs. Louise Arbour, to lay charges of crime against humanity against Slobodan Milosevic, or to make them public if such charges have already been laid, as well as against all the other people responsible for the ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo.

As a promoter of the rule of law, Canada could also initiate an international public action and ask the International Court of Justice, as Bosnia-Herzegovina has already done with regard to the

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other conflict caused by Milosevic, to rule on the violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by Yugoslavia.

The improvisation that has characterised the planning of the humanitarian aid efforts so far must now be replaced by a more effective type of coordination. In light of the decisions made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Canada must now concentrate its efforts on providing assistance to Kosovar refugees in camps set up in neighbouring countries so that they can live and survive, in minimally decent conditions, until they can return home.

It must also facilitate the work of Canadian and Quebec NGOs that have mobilized a lot more effectively to come to the rescue of Kosovars and prevent them from having to disperse against their will, adding to the Armenian and Jewish Diasporas, just to name these two, a new Diaspora that will bemoan the homeland it lost for generations and generations.

The humanitarian crisis in Kosovo also demonstrates the need for genuine reform of the mechanisms related to maintaining and imposing international peace and security. It is not appropriate for NATO to dominate events to the point of becoming the military arm of the international community, while the UN is left out of operations that are of great concern to the community of the world.

• (1900)

More than ever before, the United Nations' military and financial capacity must be examined in depth, and the vetoes of its permanent members seriously challenged.

As an applicant for membership on the security council, Canada made a commitment to advocating a genuine reform of that forum. Now it needs to convince others on the security council and in the UN family of the urgency for such a reform, and show that its election to the security council counts has not been without effect.

In concluding, I cannot help but express my frustration—and I do not believe I am the only one in this House—about the Prime Minister's refusal to clearly commit to a debate, followed by a vote, in the event that consideration ought to be given to sending ground forces to Kosovo.

In fact, our participation in this evening's exercise must not in any way be interpreted as a green light for the government to continue to act without further debate in Parliament. It must seek parliamentary authorization, particularly if it comes to putting the Canadian Forces on active service in Kosovo.

It is, moreover, high time that the National Defence Act was amended in order to require the government to obtain such authorization from Parliament. Sections 31 and 32 should formally and explicitly provide that the government is required to seek parliamentary approval, thus democratizing the process by which our armed forces are deployed to ensure international peace and security.

There has been a Crown prerogative in this area for long enough. This must be done away with, and the elected representatives of the people must be given a deciding voice when it comes to sending troops abroad to impose, build or maintain peace.

If the international community had taken action against Hitler in 1936, 50 million lives could have been spared, and the genocide of the Jewish people avoided.

Canada can assume a lead role within the Atlantic Alliance and the international community. It must stop cowering before a man who has committed and has others commit with each passing day crimes that outrage humanity and that must stop.

Just as the lovers in Sarajevo were victims of crimes that have gone largely unpunished, the lovers of Pristina must not be allowed to become the victims of the dark machinations and trickery thought up by men to justify their cowardice, to paraphrase Euripides.

These men should ask themselves why war is necessary, as sixth-grader Élyse Caron-Beaudoin did when she wrote:

Why go to war  
and cause such pain?  
Why break people's hearts  
Again and again?

Why let our hate  
Destroy our souls?  
Why strike down love  
While the drumbeat rolls?

Why orphan children  
Who have done no wrong?  
Why terrify those  
With nowhere to belong?

Why is there always  
A country at war?  
Why can there not be  
Peace ever more?

Why do you fight  
Young soldier, so brave?  
Why all these bombs  
And these thousands of graves?

Why is war necessary? Sometimes, too often in fact, because of cowardice. Why is war necessary? Sometimes for freedom.

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand from my colleague's intervention that he supports NATO's involvement in the Yugoslav republic, on the one hand. I understand that, on the other, he supports our country's humanitarian mission, but there is a bit of a paradox I would like him to explain.

• (1905)

He is proposing that Canada head a UN initiative to make Kosovo a protectorate. We know very well that the UN has proven totally incapable of staunching the hemorrhage that started in Kosovo long before NATO initiated its air strikes.

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How is it possible to acknowledge that the UN has been unable to fulfil the role now played by NATO and at the same time ask the UN to provide a solution to the problems it could not initially solve?

The two are incompatible.

My colleague mentioned quite rightly and simply cowardice. To count on the impossibility of acting in order to assuage one's conscience would be cowardice. Seeing that the UN was unable to intervene to resolve the basic humanitarian problem in Kosovo, NATO intervened, and we supported this initiative. It would have been cowardice to say "Since we cannot resolve the problem with the UN, let us do nothing".

**Mr. Daniel Turp:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that my party or any opposition party could be accused of cowardice. Indeed, we have supported actions taken by Canada and NATO and will continue to do so because we believe that by supporting those actions we send not only to Slobodan Milosevic but also to all proponents of ethnic cleansing and even genocide a clear message that we will not quietly stand by; we intend to make it very clear to them that such actions are unacceptable to the international community and its member states.

However, it seems obvious that bombing will not be enough to deal with the situation and prevent ethnic cleansing. This is why we are constantly questioning the government about the commitment of ground troops, which it refuses to consider and talk about, even if this issue is the most important and, in my opinion, deserves an answer.

Regarding the international protectorate, I point out to my colleague that we must consider another solution besides autonomy, as provided for in the Rambouillet agreement. Coexistence between Serbian and Kosovar peoples seems impossible and another solution must therefore be found.

I believe that, as a member of the security council, Canada should at least make an effort, while pursuing military efforts and interventions, to bring the UN to seek a political solution. Marginalizing the UN as we are doing now is not the way to resolve the serious crisis it may be facing and the difficulty it will have to deal with a crisis of which it has been kept out.

There are many ways to ensure UN participation—the security council, the general assembly—and this is the least we should expect from a country that has always acted as a supporter and strong advocate of the United Nations.

We can favour air raids for the time being and consider ground military action, while at the same time, and most importantly, be giving the UN a mandate to consider a political solution to the present crisis.

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC):** Mr. Speaker, allow me to salute my colleague who, when it comes to international issues,

always has a great deal of common sense and knows how to take into account all the human aspects. Our colleague is quite aware that the decision to involve our young soldiers, our sons and daughters, cannot be taken lightly.

I would like to know what he thinks of the present NATO strategy, which relies exclusively on air to ground strikes.

• (1910)

I would like to ask if he can explain this choice of strategy which, if I may say so, has precipitated the exile of Kosovars. It has also resulted in the destruction of all their physical property and the death of thousands of Kosovars.

We are still not in a position to put a price on the material and human damages caused by this necessary intervention which has not been accompanied by a strategy to counter the invasion by Serb troops.

**Mr. Daniel Turp:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that NATO's strategy was to favour air strikes, so that the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would quickly, very quickly agree to sit down at the negotiation table.

It was NATO's hope that the destruction of his military capability would prompt Slobodan Milosevic to seek a peaceful settlement and go back to the negotiation table. However, NATO obviously underestimated his ability not only to protect his military arsenal, but also to resist pressure, including international pressure, and thus refuse to go back to the negotiation table.

I think we underestimated that. Even if NATO's foreign ministers maintain that their strategy might work, it has not worked so far.

Ethnic cleansing is continuing and my great fear, which is shared by others, is that ethnic cleansing will lead to genocide. It may be that, technically speaking, we cannot talk about a genocide at this point, but even the closing of the border a few days ago should be cause for concern, because it is the prelude to a possible genocide. Under these circumstances, we must anticipate, or at least consider, ground military action.

We must not let this century end the way it began, with another genocide. Armenians were the victims of genocide at the beginning of the century. Jews were the victims of genocide half way through this century and now, at the end of the century, in addition to Cambodians and Rwandans, we may have the Kosovars.

It is true that military personnel from Quebec and Canada, your sons and daughters, will put their lives on the line if ground troops are sent in, but sometimes the lives of others must be put on the line to ensure the survival of a people. We must not let a people, the Kosovars, who contribute to the world's cultural heritage, disappear by being dispersed all over the planet, as the Serb leader is hoping to do.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General for a brief question.

**Mr. Gérard Asselin:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

You were in the chair, and this member already had the opportunity to ask a question of my colleague. I would ask that you give me the chance to do so too.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I gave the floor to the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie even though I saw the hon. member for Charlevoix rise. I gave a lot of time for the answers to the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. It was well over a minute, something like three or four minutes. I did that because other members wanted to ask questions.

We have another question now, and that is why I have decided to give the parliamentary secretary the opportunity to ask a question. It will be a 30-second question, and the answer will be just as short.

• (1915)

**Mr. Jacques Saada:** Mr. Speaker, I was about to say I can feel all the sincerity in my colleague's remarks, but I have a hard time understanding his premise.

He is taking the stand that NATO's air strikes have been unproductive. Maybe he is in the know and I am not, but nothing indicates that they have been unproductive.

He contends that the presence of ground forces will make it easier to put an end to ethnic cleansing and to genocide. This kind of operation is not a matter of hours. I have a hard time understanding the logic of it all.

We should make a clear distinction between what we wish and what the facts really are. Since I have only 30 seconds, I will ask my question later on if I am given another chance.

**Mr. Daniel Turp:** Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to downplay the success of NATO's military operation and the fact that it has indeed managed to destroy a good part of the arsenal of the Yugoslav army.

Having said that, the outflow of Kosovars was not slowed down during the air strikes. As I said earlier, we still have today 80,000 displaced persons within Kosovo who could fall victim of Serbian authorities. That would justify the dispatch of ground troops.

[*English*]

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

It is a pleasure for me to take part in this debate this evening. I want to speak on our role in Kosovo, where we are and where I believe we should be heading.

Today, as NATO has just celebrated its 50th anniversary, it is clear that it has become history's most successful alliance. Recently NATO's role in Yugoslavia is the most visible confirmation of the enduring value of a transatlantic alliance for strong security in Europe.

Kosovo is a region that demands our attention. It has historically been subjected to many different types of conflict. I would like to look at the historical context in which Kosovo is placed today while shedding some light on the brutal nature of Mr. Milosevic's regime.

Conflict has plagued Kosovo for hundreds of years. The humanitarian crisis in Kosovo is the most recent manifestation of a long history of conflict for Kosovars. Time does not allow me to chronicle the history.

If we look to the period in the mid-20th century following the breakup of Yugoslavia by the axis powers in April 1941, most of Kosovo was incorporated into an Italian controlled greater Albania. At this time the Kosovars collaborated with the fascist state. Kosovo saw little stability in this period. It was not until another oppressive regime took power in 1944 that Kosovars began to see some sort of consistency in their lives, the communists.

Under the communists, Kosovars were still oppressed. In July 1945 the communist-dominated assembly voted for the voluntary union of Kosovo with the republic of Serbia within a Yugoslav federation. Yugoslavia's Albanians were treated as a national minority with no right to a republic of their own. Clearly the voices of Kosovars were not heard.

Oppression of individual liberties is the hallmark of the communist regime. The state security police, through extensive surveillance and harassment, oppressed Albanians. This harassment was so severe that between 1945 and 1966 over 200,000 moved to Turkey.

The treatment of Kosovar Albanians has consistently been terrible, but it pales in comparison to the depths of depravity that Mr. Milosevic has reached. The difference between Mr. Milosevic's reign of terror and what we saw at the period after the war is that Mr. Milosevic wants to murder, rape and squeeze every bit of humanity out of these people.

I have chosen to look at this time period because it took place in the 20th century context. It was only 55 years ago that Kosovo was under the control of a fascist regime. It was only 50 years ago that NATO was formed to provide for the collective security of the North Atlantic. It was only 24 hours ago when women and children were raped and murdered. It was only 24 hours ago when the fathers of these children were lined up against a wall and shot in the back.

What we are dealing with in this debate is not history. It is the present. As we speak, atrocities are taking place that cannot be left

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unnoticed. As we sit here this evening, people are being shot like sitting ducks for the entire world to see.

• (1920 )

Canada as a member of NATO must act promptly, decisively and without hesitation to restore peace. NATO was designed to do this and to do anything else would be a waste of our time and money. NATO acted quickly in Bosnia. NATO actions in Bosnia illustrate how it was called upon to ensure peace in a military role.

In 1992 a terrible conflict exploded in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During the next three years, hundreds of thousands of people were killed and over two million were forced from their homes. The missions assumed by NATO in the former Yugoslavia played a critical role in bringing peace to Bosnia, while at the same time affirming that NATO was doing its job quickly and effectively.

NATO first became involved in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 by deploying ships and aircraft to monitor UN sanctions on the Adriatic and the no fly zone over Bosnia. In 1993 this monitoring shifted to enforcement. Following the UN security council's adoption of resolution 836 in June, NATO offered close air support to the United Nations protection force, UNPROFOR, that was on the ground in Bosnia. Shortly thereafter, NATO began to develop air strike options to help lift the siege of Sarajevo and undertook its first combat action in February 1994 when allied aircraft shot down four aircraft violating the UN no fly zone.

NATO continued to take a more active role in promoting stability when it bombed a Bosnian Serb arms depot in May 1995. The Bosnian Serbs responded by taking UN peacekeepers as hostages. Bosnian Serb forces overran Srebrenica and Zepa, safe areas, in July. It became clear that diplomacy, humanitarian peacekeeping and humanitarian air strikes had reached their limits, much like the failed Rambouillet agreement.

Under the authority of UN resolution 836, NATO responded by initiating a three week campaign of air strikes against Bosnian Serb military targets. This operation, named Deliberate Force, delivered over 1,000 munitions, including 700 smart bombs and cruise missiles. The operation was a success. It reached its objective of reducing the threat to Sarajevo and deterring future attacks on the safe areas.

I cannot stress how important NATO's role was in Bosnia-Herzegovina. NATO had an objective in Bosnia and it reached it. We have an objective in Kosovo and we must reach it too. This common objective was the prevention of loss of life and the escalation of violence.

Many people do not realize how repressive this man is. In January of this year observers from the Kosovar Verification Mission discovered the bodies of 45 Albanians in the village of

Racak. According to the observers the victims, including one child and three women, were killed by Serb security forces. The international community was quick to unanimously condemn this act of mass murder. But what good does universal condemnation do when people continue to die? Our number one priority is to stop the brutal killing and the destruction of human lives and property in Kosovo. We need action, not words. Acting is what we are doing.

Following this massacre, Serb forces entered the village of Racak. This led to fighting between Serb forces and the separatists in the whole area around the villages. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that over 5,000 people were driven out of this village by the fighting. Just today we read in the newspaper reports from Albania of how ethnic Albanian women and girls were publicly stripped and then raped by Serb militia as they tried to leave Kosovo.

Yesterday masked gunmen shot and killed one of Yugoslavia's most prominent journalists outside his home. This happened after a pro Milosevic newspaper accused him of supporting the NATO bombing campaign. This is absolute madness. NATO has taken an active role in the past and should continue to pursue peace and stability.

As members of this transatlantic alliance, we as Canadians cannot sit idly by and watch Milosevic's reign of terror beat people to the ground. We have fought for what we believe in and we should continue to press forward in our fight to relieve the people of Kosovo of their pain. How can we not support NATO air strikes? Can we sit and watch as women are raped in front of their children, as fathers are shot in front of their children? No, I think not.

It is for people like Milosevic that we have security organizations like NATO. As I illustrated earlier, NATO acted in Bosnia-Herzegovina to neutralize the Bosnian Serbs. We have spent years ensuring that someone like Milosevic cannot bully people, cannot do as the fascists did in the second world war.

Billions of dollars and years of planning and policy discussion, all for the collective security of NATO member countries. All of this designed to use the tool of last resort to ensure that peace is maintained. We should use it when all of our other options are no longer viable.

• (1925 )

It was made clear a long time ago that Mr. Milosevic did not see the United Nations and NATO as serious, capable organizations. The failure of the Rambouillet meetings illustrated that Mr. Milosevic does not want peace and does not want to stop the killing. When one tyrant can cause so much death and destruction, it is apparent that we as Canadians must act. It makes me proud that we have done so. It makes me proud that we will continue to support our NATO initiative in whatever way we must.

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Our actions must diminish the capabilities of the Yugoslav army and the special forces who have committed atrocities against civilians in Kosovo. Our air campaign will allow us to meet this objective. It may take some time, but our NATO allies knew from the start that degrading Yugoslavia's military capabilities would take time. I think we must remain committed to our present policy of full support of NATO in this air campaign.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Hillsborough for his very articulate remarks. He makes a very compelling case for the actions taken thus far in this horrific crisis emerging in Kosovo. My question that I would direct to the hon. member is along these lines.

I know the hon. member was present for the remarks made by the Prime Minister. He will recall the Prime Minister's quite accurate statement that there is a need for unity not only in the House but in this country as we support the NATO action or the actions of our troops.

To that end, I ask the question, is there not an opportunity, and should there not be an opportunity in the House for the parliamentary expression of the will of this support and this unconditional feeling that we want to put forward to encourage our troops and send them a message that we in parliament support that action? Can the hon. member think of a more compelling case for an opportunity to have a vote in which that expression could take place on the floor of the House of Commons? I can think of none.

**Mr. George Proud:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his remarks and his question.

I believe that parliament should always play a role in these things. I also believe that government is elected to govern and there are certain things that government has to do whether we like it or not.

Even in one of the most powerful legislatures in the world, that of the United States, the Government of the United States has the power to commit troops to areas of conflict and then the U.S. congress debates it, probably before it happens but most times after it happens.

This is an ongoing debate among all parliamentarians. I would like to see the debate take place, but there are some things that government has to do. One does not want to lay one's cards out on the table. If one is going to send troops into certain areas, one does not want to tell the people before one does that. There are certain things one must let government do and hopefully it will do it in the best interests of all Canadians.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my congratulations as well to the hon. member for Hillsborough

for an excellent presentation. With all due respect, he did not adequately address in his answer the question of my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party about the vote.

Perhaps the hon. member for Hillsborough is a bit confused. What the opposition is asking for is not whether we commit or vote on committing ground troops at this time. We recognize that decision will be made at some time in the future. What we were endeavouring to do today during Oral Question Period, and what we will continue to try to do during this debate this evening until the wee hours of the morning I am sure, is to get a commitment from the government that if the government does move to commit ground troops in the future, it will only be after a full and open debate in the House culminating in a vote.

I do not understand what is so difficult about getting a commitment, not only from the Prime Minister, but from all government members of parliament on that very issue of democracy in this parliament.

**Mr. George Proud:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in the previous answer to my colleague, I think that debate must take place if we are to send ground troops. There is nothing in my estimation that is more important than having a debate on this issue.

The other thing about it is I am not convinced that these air strikes will not do the job. We are 21 days into it now and it could go on for a couple more weeks.

• (1930 )

I am sure the damage being done will bring Mr. Milosevic's army and his people to heel at the end of the day. I am convinced that the air strikes will do the job. I am sure the troops that we will be committing there after the fact will be peacekeepers. I am sure we will have a debate in the House because governments have to govern and there are things they have to do. I see no reason to say that we should have a vote on it at this time.

**Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that we knew how ruthless Milosevic was. Under those conditions, knowing how ruthless he was, why were we not prepared for the tragedy that has followed? Why were we so unprepared to look after the refugees? Why are we still unprepared to look after the humanitarian destruction that has followed?

I think this debate should be what gives us time to stop and look at where we went wrong because we went wrong somewhere if we have achieved the exact opposite of what we wanted, which was safety for the Albanian people.

**Mr. George Proud:** Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we can. Maybe we can do more for humanitarian aid. We are putting up millions of dollars. We are sending people in to look after the refugees. We have offered to bring the refugees to Canada. This has

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probably changed at the present time. We are probably going to send them to the surrounding countries.

I believe Canada does not have to take a back seat to any country in what we have done to give humanitarian aid to these people in the terrible, stressful time they are having.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this debate is a reprise of two earlier debates on October 7, 1998 and February 17, 1999.

I had posed some questions to opposition parties during the first debate. In a very real sense we can see law emerging from this process of discussion and give and take. We do not actually need a vote. Sometimes we get more consensus the other way.

It is elementary that the United Nations charter outlawed the recourse to armed force and military action except in the two extraordinary situations sanctioned by the charter; that is individual or collective self-defence or action under Chapter VII of the charter, the peacemaking sections. I temporarily overlooked Articles 53 and 107, the enemy states sections which authorize actions without any limits. They are still there against Germany and Japan but they are anachronisms.

It is also true that regional security organizations, being legal creatures of the charter and subject to the charter, cannot partake of any legal powers higher than or in conflict with the powers of the security council. That is explicit in Chapter VIII of the charter. In other words, a regional security organization cannot hoist itself by its own bootstraps into a legal power to use armed force that it does not have under the charter.

These were rules which, after the one exception of the Korean War in 1950, the world community was able to live under during the cold war because, in spite of some perhaps contemporary views, the cold war system of public order maintained a strong regulation of the political-territorial status quo of Yalta and the other wartime agreements.

What we have seen though at the end of the cold war is the breakdown of this post-war system of order and the breakdown in consequence of some of those artificial multinational states that were created by the Versailles treaty and maintained by Yalta and other instruments thereafter. The new century, contrary to the general view of a century of progress and enlightenment, may well turn out to be the century of inter-ethnic conflict. We are rediscovering in a very horrifying way the pre-1914 conflicts in which the Balkans, of course, were the cockpits of Europe as Bismarck said.

To go back to this general issue, what are we to do in a present situation where a crisis faces the world community, but where, in the view of many governments, action under Chapter VII of the charter is inhibited by the fear—which may or may not be unfounded until it is tested—of the exercise of a veto by a

permanent member of the security council? Russia or China are the ones that have been fingered.

We should not forget that in the Korean War of 1950, President Truman and his secretary of state, Dean Acheson, developed in a very imaginative way the recourse to the UN general assembly, the Uniting for Peace Resolution. It was adopted by 52 to 5, with 2 abstentions. It basically stated that although the security council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, if it is blocked by wilful obstruction in the use of the veto then the general assembly has plenary powers to act.

• (1935 )

I think that is a useful precedent. I wonder if it could not be used in the present situation if we are unable to take further action compatibly with the charter.

We must remember that there is no veto in the general assembly. An ordinary two-thirds majority applies and the general assembly can be called into being with a 24 hour notice in an emergency situation.

In the debates in the House, those two debates I referred to, I raised this new concept of humanitarian intervention. Admittedly it has some difficult antecedents. One was what might be called the colonialist power of intervention asserted in the 19th century by Britain, France, Germany and other countries, sometimes cloaked as reprisals. That is generally considered anachronistic. Some of us would also remember that during the cold war it was asserted by the bloc leaders on both sides. Everyone will remember the situation of the intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Prague in 1968, the so-called hegemonial intervention, that you can intervene to enforce solidarity within your own bloc.

However, there are other antecedents to this which should not be confused with those past interventions. One of the more interesting developments is the attempt to flesh out, to give new parameters defining modalities for this concept of humanitarian intervention which is likely to be the weapon we need to cope with this inter-ethnic conflict that is going to be with us.

I do regret that it has not been felt possible to involve the United Nations more firmly in the process to date. However, there is nothing to prevent the United Nations from being accommodated to the crisis problem solving as it develops.

The Minister for International Cooperation has already recognized the primacy of the United Nations in the general policy aspects of humanitarian care and control of refugees. One had hints which come close to some suggestions on the opposition side that it might be possible to accommodate, within a framework of an international military force now limited to NATO, non-NATO members. There is nothing to prevent the United Nations from authorizing an international force in which NATO might be the

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prime element but which could include Russian troops or other troops. It could even be put under U.S. command. If this sounds rather strange, it was in fact the solution found in the Korean War of 1950 with an American commander-in-chief but under the political control of the United Nations. When he exceeded his powers, and he was a very strong personality, he was fired by his president after consultation with the secretary general of the United Nations.

The possibility is there and it is possible in a phase 2 of the operations to control the crisis in Yugoslavia. That would be the best and most productive way to proceed.

I would also suggest the use of the world court. I listened carefully to the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. He touched on this but I would like to suggest that the court is available and it can give decisions on very short notice, the reasons sometimes come later. Fleshing out the limitations to this concept of humanitarian intervention, it cannot solely be limited to one country's own conception of what is right and wrong. We get into the Latin legal phrase, *quod licet Jovi, licet bovi*. What is allowed to Jupiter on high must be allowed also to the humble ox. There are other countries around the world whose jurists have been in touch with me over the last few weeks saying, "Why can't we do this?" It suggests that we should put this as far as possible in the next phase into United Nations' hands.

I would also like to get a ruling on the limitations as to aerial bombardment. It is often forgotten that the rules of aerial bombardment are not what they were in World War II where members will notice it was not a count in the Nuremberg indictments. The additional protocols in 1977 in a very real sense limit the capacity to conduct aerial bombardment. I think it would help to have a world court ruling on this.

● (1940)

Why do I speak of law? It is simply because I am reminded of another American president, President Kennedy, who had advice from his security advisers, among others, to bomb those missile bases in Cuba. President Kennedy's answer was essentially that a great state is not armed solely with the law, it has its armed power, but the essence of wise decision making is to choose those modalities that solve the problem that are compatible with international law.

President Kennedy's peaceful solution to the Cuban missile crisis is a textbook case in all our university courses on United Nations law and it is a model to follow. I welcome the suggestions that I discern in the opposition and I discern in some of the government answers that there will be an increasing attempt to phase in the operations with the United Nations. That is the more traditional Canadian way, that we operate through the international authority, through the United Nations. In the particular circumstances, it may not have been possible to be so at the beginning, but it is possible to be so at the end.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the speaker's premise. I would just like to develop it a little bit further.

In terms of intervention for humanitarian reasons, here we have NATO, which has historically been a defensive organization, suddenly turning offensive. Under what basis, what authority, does he see this happening? Why are we not intervening, for example, in East Timor? What would happen if an altercation occurred between China and Taiwan? What would happen in the Basque? What authority is there?

Surely, as a professor on this topic, he undoubtedly has some thoughts on this. What authority does he really see NATO involved in the way in which it is involved in this very aggressive intervention?

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, NATO was involved because to those making the immediate decisions it was the only organization seen to be ready and able to act. However, I have my own doubts about it because the alliance is strictly a defensive one. It is even more limited than the normal regional security organization.

It should not be assumed, however, that there may not be a sufficient legal base in itself. When President Truman launched the Uniting for Peace resolution it was a revolutionary act, but it is entered into UN history because it is obviously good and sensible.

Let us face it, in terms of Canadian policies in international organizations, the general assembly is a much more democratic and open body than the security council. We have been arguing for a reform of the security council. We get nowhere because the veto of the permanent members applies to amendments of the charter designed so the security council should yield to the general assembly.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the question is not to know whether or not we are going to vote. The opposition had indeed asked the government to hold a debate to better inform the public, because those who do not watch any of the reports on the news networks do not know what is going on.

We know that Canada is supporting the UN to defend the Kosovars in that war-torn land. But while we are debating this issue here tonight to better inform the public, how many children will die? How many women will be raped and killed while we have this debate tonight? How many seniors will die?

The question I would like to put to my hon. colleague is the following: what part will Canada continue to play if NATO decides to dispatch ground troops? If this decision is made, we know that 200,000 soldiers will have to be sent to Kosovo tomorrow morning. Is Canada prepared to take part in ground operations and meet all



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the requirements? We are part of things right now, we are caught up in the system. How far will we have to go?

• (1945)

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, our role is necessarily limited by the size of our army and by our public defence system. There are only four planes, I think.

Of course, we have no control over the rules of the game. Nonetheless, since we are members of NATO, we were asked to co-operate, and we did so for these reasons. Even though our contribution is more of a symbol than a display military might, I think that our membership in the alliance created an obligation for us. But we must ask whether NATO is adapted to today's reality. That is the key question, in my view. The renewal of NATO seems to be a pressing issue more than ever.

[English]

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member's support for the suggestion of our leader and our party with respect to the possibility of an OSCE or a UN peacekeeping force as opposed to a NATO force.

I wonder if the member would also like to comment on the application of article 52 of the Vienna convention on the law of treaties which explicitly forbids coercion and force to compel any state to sign a treaty or agreement. In light of that and in light of the element in the Rambouillet accord which put NATO at the heart of peacekeeping, does the hon. member not feel that there is a conflict?

**Mr. Ted McWhinney:** Mr. Speaker, on the first question which the hon. member raised, certainly part of the consensus that emerged during our two debates in October last year and in February was looking toward international organizations. If it could not be a force sanctioned by the security council, then it could be the OSCE, which has the advantage of having the former Soviet Union as a member. Therefore, we would have its co-operation.

Nevertheless, like NATO it is also an organization that in many respects is out of date. It is there to preserve the Helsinki accords, which themselves were to preserve the Yalta division of Europe. I am not sure that the OSCE is the answer. I would say that we should go back to the general assembly.

I respect article 52 of the Vienna convention and the member's interpretation of it.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I value the opportunity to participate in this very important and significant debate. I deeply regret the decision of the government to equivocate with respect to the role of parliament and the role of each elected member of this House in making a decision with respect to the issue of the possible use of ground troops. I do not understand why it is that our government and our Prime

Minister have taken the position which ultimately amounts to contempt for the role of elected representatives.

I listened with interest to the Conservative questioners. My colleague from Winnipeg Transcona and I were here in 1990 and 1991 and we certainly recall our efforts to get a vote from the then Conservative government. It stonewalled and refused to act until long after the military action had taken place in Iraq, which began on January 15. I think history has to be remembered in that instance.

I rose in this House 19 days ago on behalf of my colleagues to speak in another debate. It was a take note debate with respect to the pending decision to support the use of NATO aerial attacks in Kosovo. We were then faced with compelling and moving evidence of an impending humanitarian disaster, one which in many respects had already started to take place: the burning of villages, the destruction of people's homes, mass expulsions, murder, torture and rape.

I remember vividly the assurances given by ministers, privately, in committee and elsewhere, that this firm course of action with air strikes would bring an early return to the negotiating table and hopefully an end to the ethnic cleansing which all of us in this House deplore.

• (1950)

At that time, in the absence of what we felt was any other viable alternative to stop the humanitarian tragedy, we supported the decision to proceed.

Today, 19 days later, where are we? We know that our troops, based at Aviano and elsewhere, have performed an outstanding job under very difficult circumstances. We know the fear of their families and indeed their own fear at a time like this and we extend our support to them, as well as to the aid workers on the ground.

We are deeply impressed by the incredible generosity of Canadians who have opened their homes and their hearts to refugees. It has not happened yet, but certainly I know my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North Centre and others have been playing a leading role in encouraging our government to continue this generosity.

Here we are 19 days later with NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. What have they come up with in terms of new approaches and a new strategy? They have decided to continue the air attacks. Continue, keep going, make them even stronger.

Quite clearly this situation is a human and a military catastrophe, both for the Kosovars and Albanians who have been driven out of their homes, villages and communities; not just outside Kosovo, but up into the mountains. They are hiding within Kosovo itself. Their villages continue to be burned and they continue to be raped. As well, too many innocent civilians have been killed by the bombing. I have to ask: Why bomb a Yugoslavian car plant which also involved the killing of innocent civilians?

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Our defence critic raised questions about the use of depleted uranium in U.S. antitank weapons. These are serious questions for which we are awaiting answers from the Minister of National Defence.

My colleagues and I have all had harrowing personal stories told to us by those who are affected by this tragedy. It was brought home to me when a Serbian constituent phoned. He said "How do I explain to my daughter that her government, the Government of Canada, is bombing her grandmother's home?"

Within a couple of hours I had an anguished call from a Kosovar Albanian living in Canada who said that he was unable to contact his parents. Silence. He has no idea. There is fear and uncertainty in not knowing what is happening to them.

We have to ask the question: What do we do now? How do we answer these anguished questions of our constituents and, indeed, of Canadians?

Today our leader, the hon. member for Halifax, called once again on our government to put diplomacy and negotiations and not bombing at the heart of our strategy. She reiterated the call which my hon. colleague from Halifax West and I made at the meeting of the national defence and veterans affairs committee on March 31. It was a call for Canada to show leadership within NATO and within the United Nations for an immediate return to the negotiating table; not with a whole list of conditions, but with two basic conditions: first, an end to the atrocities on the ground, the brutality, the ethnic cleansing and the crimes against humanity; and second, an end to the bombing. With those two conditions accomplished there would be a return to the table.

When we get to the table there are a couple of key points that must be considered. First, we have to recognize that Rambouillet is, for all intents and purposes, dead. In fact, given the inclusion in the Rambouillet accord of the provision for NATO peacekeeping troops, I think many of us in retrospect would say that this was an impossible condition for Milosevic to take back to the Serbian government.

There were alternatives. Indeed, there are alternatives. One alternative, of course, is not to have a NATO peacekeeping force but a force under United Nations jurisdiction, under OSCE jurisdiction. Instead we heard again today from our Minister of National Defence the statement that he made as recently as last Friday, that this has to be a NATO-led force. That is fatal to any significant negotiated agreement in this area.

• (1955)

We appeal to the minister to recognize that and to recognize the absolutely critical role that Russia must play as well in these

negotiations. It has been effectively sidelined, silenced and shut out. It proposed a G-8 meeting. We understand that may happen and we welcome that. However, both in negotiations and in peacekeeping on the ground Russia must be involved.

What form will Kosovo take after negotiations? It is very difficult to say. There again, Rambouillet is likely a dead letter. To talk about autonomy within the context of what has taken place recently is very difficult to imagine. It may be that there will be some sort of international protectorate, but we will have to examine that with care.

The fundamental point that we as New Democrats are underlining is that the United Nations and the OSCE must play the leading role in negotiations. We called for a special emergency meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Once again, we are appealing for that.

I am splitting my time, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of minutes left, so I will try to be brief.

We are calling for a special meeting of the UN general assembly. At the same time we want to acknowledge the very important contribution made by groups such as Project Ploughshares, Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, the Regina Peace Council, the Canadian Peace Alliance, Voices of Women, End the Arms Race and many others in urging an alternative approach, an approach that involves peaceful negotiations.

NATO is clearly not the answer. There is a double standard in NATO's approach. It is silent, for example, on the appalling situation of the Kurds in Turkey. Then there is the approach taken by the United States within NATO. It has contempt for its obligations to the United Nations. It has not paid its dues. It ignores the call for an international criminal court. It ignores the international court of justice. I could go on and on. It supports ruthless dictators. This is not the body to enforce a new humanitarian law.

We call, along with Project Ploughshares and others, for a new mechanism to legitimize within the framework of the United Nations peaceful humanitarian intervention.

I want to again note our thanks to those groups—

**The Speaker:** Perhaps in the questions and comments you could mention them. I will now entertain questions and comments.

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member. I recall in March 1998 when the UN passed a resolution. Early in the fall we passed another resolution. Both of those resolutions attempted to peacefully convince the sides to come together. That has not happened. At the security council we had blockage and intransigence.

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However, there have been some helpful signs, some from unexpected quarters. In this area history has shown that not everyone comes into this situation with totally clean hands.

During part of the last two weeks I have talked to many people in my riding, including Serbian Canadians, who have real concerns and maybe a different point of view. I support what we are doing within NATO, but I would welcome some intervention by the UN.

Russia has given some indication of wanting to involve itself in negotiations. What is the member's feelings on the involvement of Russia as a potential broker of a new rapprochement between these parties?

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues have said it is the key. There is no question that Russia must be involved at the heart of these negotiations. That is one of the reasons we have called for that consistently.

Russia's position with respect to NATO peacekeeping troops is that it is a non-starter, so we have to re-examine that as well.

Of course we have to bring the United Nations much further into the loop. However, there is a lot of wisdom in civil society that has been ignored. Our government could show some leadership in convening, both within Canada and internationally, some sort of an international forum to seek alternatives to simple air strikes and bombing. There is that wisdom and we should be calling on it, both in Canada and internationally.

• (2000)

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were talking about debates advancing and I think there has been some advance in thinking on both sides since the two earlier debates we have had on this general issue.

Bearing in mind his strictures against treaties made under duress, could the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas envisage a new diplomatic negotiating process that might produce a more even-handed disposition for either the present government of Yugoslavia or a successor government? In other words, does he have something more concrete in mind, accepting the premise that Rambouillet essentially would have been, as he said, a treaty imposed under duress as settlement?

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, clearly we are saying that NATO cannot be the body that is ultimately responsible for bringing peace either to this region or in seeking to expand its role generally on its 50th anniversary as it looks for a new reason to exist.

Certainly we could look within the umbrella of the United Nations. We have also suggested that there may very well be wisdom in the general assembly itself. In his own comments the

hon. member alluded to the importance of involving the UN general assembly and not just the security council. We may be able to bring that wisdom in to involve Russia directly in the process of decision making and ultimately negotiation.

If we are to achieve that success in negotiation, we have to be prepared to get back to the table without a whole list of preconditions. That is what our leader has called for today. That is what we are repeating at this time. For God's sake, let us recognize not a whole list of preconditions, stop the ethnic cleansing and the atrocities, stop the bombing, get back to the table and arrive at a peaceful solution that will allow all of the those who have been driven from their homes to return to their homes, that will allow for reconstruction and that will allow for just as many resources to be put into healing and rebuilding as have been put into violence and bombing.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, could the hon. member comment on the long term impact that Canada's involvement in the Kosovo crisis will have on Canada's reputation?

As he knows, since the Pearson years and before Canada has cultivated this peacekeeping, peacemaking international reputation. Would it not be the case that as a result of Canada's modest involvement militarily in this matter its much cherished peacekeeping role internationally might be affected adversely for many years to come?

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any doubt that this is a serious concern. That is all the more reason for Canada to finally show some independence, to reach out and to show leadership internationally in brokering a solution that will restore the reputation we have fought so hard to establish.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the very important subject of today's debate.

[*English*]

I believe I can truthfully say that in all my 35 years of public service this is one of the most difficult issues I have ever had to grapple with. It was a struggle. We were basically taking a position and making a decision around an issue to which I am fundamentally opposed, the use of violence. It is violent. Bombing is violent. No matter how smart we say these bombs are, it is a violent approach to this problem.

However, we concluded that because of seriousness of the atrocities and the senseless slaughter taking place, which we saw coming across our TV screens with men, women and children suffering, with young children crying and being separated from their families, we would lend our support to try to bring this

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senseless slaughter to an end. That has been the thrust of the NDP throughout this whole business, to bring an end to the terrible situation we are faced with.

• (2005 )

Last Friday I attended a peace rally in Halifax organized by the Voice of Women and some other organizations. One of the people primarily responsible for organizing it was a woman over 90 years of age, Maria Duckworth who worked all her life for peace and harmony. The people at that rally made it very clear that they were opposed to bombing Yugoslavia. They talked about the legality of the action being taken. They stressed their concerns about the innocent people who were being slaughtered in the whole process. I assured them that we would certainly carry forward their voice and their concerns into the debate tonight.

We talk about ethnic cleansing. I would like to say right off the bat how very much I abhor that phrase. I know many members use that phrase, including members of my caucus. I suggest that we are not dealing with ethnic cleansing. When we talk about cleansing we know that when we clean something it is because something is dirty. We wash our cars because they are dirty. We scrub our floors because they are dirty. We wash our hands because they are dirty. We try to cleanse these things. When we talk about a people being purged and driven from their country and being slaughtered because someone is not content with the ethnic background of the particular group of people, that is not a cleansing process. Let us call it what it is. It is genocide. It is war. It is crime against humanity. That is what it is so we should call it that.

We see the results of that. We see countless numbers of refugees fleeing their homes. We see young children coming across the border on bicycles so traumatised that they cannot talk about what is happening.

On the way here today I read in the paper about women, young girls being taken from the caravans as they were trying to cross the border, being stripped publicly, taken back into fields and raped. People could hear the screams, many of them never to be seen again. These are the things that are happening and we must come to grips with them.

There is another side of the issue that we do not hear about. I want to read briefly from a letter from a person in Belgrade who wrote:

I wish to point out a special side effect of the bombing of which little has been said: the actions of the NATO pact are so wide, that in the first phase they can already be characterized as absolute war which means the destruction preconceptions—cultural, spiritual and natural lives of millions of people in our country.

The toxic nature of the 19,200 tons of explosives (equal to the amount used in the Nagasaki bombing) used is well known to you. We warn you that Serbia is one of the greatest sources of underground waters in Europe and that the contamination will be felt in the whole surrounding area all the way to the Black Sea.

It then goes on to talk about the national parks and the various factories that were hit:

The village of Gracanica was shelled; there is situated one of the most important monasteries of the medieval orthodox culture and the candidate for the UNESCO heritage list. Numerous civil targets in other cities were hit—schools, hospitals, the sites considered as cultural monuments.

Especially worrying are the latest news saying that, in the next phases of their bombing, NATO will use the airplanes B1 and A10 which are carrying missiles with depleted uranium previously used in Iraq and Bosnia. The use of these will bring about the vast dangerous consequences to the health not only of the soldiers, but also of the whole population, and you know that the toxins and the radioactivity know no nationality or borders.

This person went on to describe some of the things being experienced by the people in Serbia.

In reality war has no winners. Someone may end up victorious but in reality there is no winner. Everyone suffers as is evident by this conflict. It emphasizes that we need to have as impartial a body as possible to deal with the international conflicts and the conflicts within sovereign states. We need to strengthen the UN for this purpose. It will not happen overnight, but it will never happen as long as we keep ceding power to NATO and not looking directly at where we should be focusing our attention in terms of strengthening the security council and the UN. Canada should be taking a leading in role in this measure.

I am very pleased that Canada responded so favourably when it appeared that we were to have many refugees coming here.

• (2010 )

I think of the small town of Greenwood, Nova Scotia, and how the people rallied around, got all kinds of supplies and got ready to receive refugees they thought were coming. In times of crises like this one it shows what Canadians are really made of when we open our hearts to other people. This is key to the whole thing, opening our hearts to other people.

As we debate the issue tonight it should not be a we and they kind of issue. I feel very strongly that it should not be us against them. It should be all of us together using our collective wisdom and using our collective will to bring an end to this situation. We should be working together to try to find a solution. I am sure that every member of the House wants this tragedy to end as quickly and as peacefully as possible.

I encourage us to work together in the spirit of love and the spirit of harmony to try to bring all our collective thoughts to bear on the issue and to use every means possible to bring about a peaceful negotiation.

Many suggestions have been made as to how this might be done and I will not repeat them. At this time I would like to say in conclusion that my thoughts and prayers go out to all who are suffering, the many people in Kosovo who have been forced to flee from their homes, who have been separated from their families, and all the people in Serbia who are experiencing terrible bombing. It must be terrible to have bombs falling around them as they try to

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lead their daily lives. Our men and women in the military are working hard to try to deal with the situation. The people in immigration are working hard with the refugees as are the people providing international aid. All these people are in our thoughts and our prayers as we work together to try to resolve this problem.

**Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what does the hon. member think about NATO being there? Does he feel we are achieving anything? Does he feel we are there as a lost cause?

Does the hon. member think that the NATO forces are sensitive to the history of the Balkans and are sensitive to the fact that two world wars almost started from the Balkans? Does the hon. member think that NATO is achieving anything there and, if so, what?

**Mr. Gordon Earle:** Mr. Speaker, initially everyone had the intention and the hope that the matter would be quickly resolved but this has not happened.

Quite honestly at this point I have questions as to how effective the bombing campaign is. That is why we are calling for a reassessment of the situation and a serious look at what strategy can be utilized to bring an end to it.

I agree with the many people who have already spoken about the role it is felt Russia should play. We should be making every concrete effort to get a commitment from Russia to try to lend its influence with its Slavic brothers to end this conflict.

I certainly feel we have to branch away from what NATO is doing and move beyond it because it certainly has not accomplished the goal we hoped would be accomplished.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He made one statement that really touched me when he said that war had no winners. When we take a look at the issues that were confronting us in World War I and again in World War II certainly that is true.

Would the hon. member not agree, if we bring this to a successful conclusion, that the only people who could be winners would not necessarily be the Serbs or the Kosovars who are fighting but the women, children and elderly? If we can provide them with homes again and give them their freedom, I believe they would be the only true winners who could come out of this conflict. I would like the hon. member to comment.

**Mr. Gordon Earle:** Mr. Speaker, I agree those are the important people we should be concerned about. They have already lost so much that it would be difficult to say that they will come out winners. Many of them will be coming out violated, traumatised or

have lost their families. The men have been taken, put in places and in many cases shot. In a lot of cases they are still losers, but they would certainly be much further ahead if we could bring this to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

• (2015 )

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two brief questions for my hon. colleague. I thank him for the work he has done on this very important issue.

First I would ask for an affirmation from my hon. colleague of the longstanding commitment of New Democrats to the fundamental right of self-determination of the people of Kosovo, basically reaffirming that commitment to their right to self-determination, to determine their own future and also obviously, for help in the reconstruction of their shattered society when they do return to their homes.

Second, would the hon. member comment briefly on the suggestion made by Senator Doug Roche, a very important suggestion, that we have another look at the agenda for peace that Boutros-Ghali published some time ago, an essential element of which was the creation of a rapid reaction force under UN auspices? I wonder if the hon. member would like to comment on that suggestion as well. It is certainly one that I support.

**Mr. Gordon Earle:** Mr. Speaker, on the first question, I agree 100% that it is very important that people be able to determine their own future. It is for that very reason I deplore the term ethnic cleansing. As I mentioned during my speech, that term implies superiority and inferiority, where something has to be cleansed because one is better than the other.

That gets to the very heart of the principle of self-determination. Even here in Canada we can look at that principle and apply it to our aboriginal peoples. We should be looking at that same concept of self-determination and the right to determine one's future when we talk about our aboriginal people.

On the rapid reaction force, I certainly agree that we have to strengthen the United Nations to be able to respond quickly and efficiently to these kinds of crises. With each day that goes by, more and more lives are lost. Every life is precious. Every time a person dies, a bit of you and me dies. We should see the common bond of humanity and try to end the suffering. Every time a person dies, we lose.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

I think it is fair to say that Canadians everywhere are concerned about the crisis in Kosovo. The people in my riding of Waterloo—

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Wellington share grave concerns about what is happening in that part of the world and are watching closely as events unfold.

How did we get to the point where we now find ourselves? The international community has gone to great lengths to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Kosovo. It is clear that Canada and NATO would prefer to resolve the problems in that part of the world through a negotiated settlement based on the Rambouillet agreement, but as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said recently, diplomacy sometimes cannot work without the threat of force.

Unfortunately we had no choice but to resort to force to halt what had developed into an intolerable situation. We had run out of peaceful options when Slobodan Milosevic rejected every peace proposal submitted to him. Meanwhile he stepped up a campaign of terror by Yugoslav authorities that has been going on for several months and it is continuing right now as we speak tonight. We have seen well documented evidence of forced expulsions, the destruction of whole villages and the massacre of civilians by Yugoslav security forces.

At one point last October we thought we were making progress toward peace. NATO's threat to use force led to the acceptance of a ceasefire at that time and limitations in the deployment of security forces in Kosovo and the creation of a Kosovo verification mission which consisted of hundreds of international verifiers, including 65 Canadians. Unfortunately this only helped diminish for a short time the acts of violence being perpetrated by the Yugoslav army and police against the people of Kosovo.

Earlier this year the situation started to deteriorate again. Security forces harassed the international verifiers. There was clear evidence that they were preparing for a massive spring offensive. By March 20 the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, was forced to evacuate the Kosovo verification mission, the KVM, because of the collapse of the ceasefire and the unacceptable threat to the safety of mission members. With the departure of the verification mission, Yugoslav forces dramatically stepped up their brutal offensive.

• (2020)

The Yugoslav government is in clear and flagrant violation of the commitments it agreed to in October. It has violated the ceasefire and responded disproportionately to the actions of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the KLA. In addition to not respecting several UN security council resolutions, Yugoslavia has systematically violated the most basic rights under international humanitarian law. It has unleashed a savage and calculated campaign of hatred and violence not only against members of the KLA, but against the civilians of Kosovo, against families. This is offensive, this is wrong and this must be stopped.

Canada and its allies simply could not stand by and do nothing while women and children, men and the elderly in Kosovo were

being killed, tortured, detained, persecuted and banished from their homes and stripped of their very identities because of their ethnic background, because of who they are. In the name of humanity we cannot and we should not and we will not stand by while this takes place.

Last September this house unanimously supported a resolution calling on the government of the federal republic of Yugoslavia and the parties involved in this inhumane confrontation to lay down their arms and to negotiate a solution with help from international organizations. In addition, in October all parties took part in a take note debate and expressed their support for Canada's involvement in Kosovo. Members of parliament have also been kept up to date on the developments in Kosovo via standing committee briefings.

Since then we have been closely following developments in that part of the world. Now many fellow Canadians and the country as a whole are engaged in the debate on what Canada should or should not do and on NATO's role in this crisis. Since the start of NATO's military action there has been considerable public debate and media coverage examining the very issues from every conceivable angle. Unlike any time in the past, Canadians have access to a wealth of information that they can sift through to form their own opinions at this time.

From all indications I have seen, most Canadians support the action taken by their government and by NATO. I think the majority of Canadians appreciate that peaceful negotiations failed to produce a diplomatic resolution to the crisis because of the intransigence of Milosevic and his government. Faced with this stalemate and the dramatically stepped up ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, I think Canadians see that military action was the only option.

The week before last, I read with great interest an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* by Christina Spencer which I believe sums up the thinking of a great many Canadians about this crisis:

Here's why Canada is right to take military action against Yugoslavia: Because the only legitimate role of any government is to protect the basic rights of its citizens. When a regime abrogates political rights, stirs hatred, shuts down the press, burns villages, herds civilians into becoming hostages ...it is difficult to defend its legitimacy. Over many years, Milosevic has done all of this. Yet human-rights-respecting countries are debating whether they have the moral right to intervene. Get serious.

As a government we still favour a diplomatic solution that ensures sustainable results and long term security in the region. I know that Canadians want this to happen. This diplomatic solution can be achieved if, as NATO has suggested, Belgrade authorities cease the savage repression of their own people and sign a peace agreement giving significant autonomy to Kosovo.

I think most Canadians would rather not have to resort to military force, but they believe Canada and NATO are nevertheless on the right track given the current grim circumstances. We must

not lose our resolve to make tough choices to ensure an effective and lasting resolution to the situation in Kosovo and the humanitarian catastrophe in that region.

Having made our commitment, I believe that Canada must now follow through to ensure a lasting peace in that part of the world. It is important given all that has happened that we now stay the course to bring about stability in that part of Europe. We will do so knowing this is not an easy position nor a lightly taken decision. We do so knowing that at the end of the day it will be judged as the right thing to do on behalf of the people of Kosovo. In the name of humanity, it is the right thing to do.

• (2025 )

**Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, every single bomb we drop drives us farther and farther from our objective of peace.

I have had calls from constituents whose families are in Serbia. They said that last year their brothers would not fight but now they cannot wait to fight because they have wholeheartedly turned against the west. We are not going to achieve our objectives by dropping more bombs. We are going to cause more problems and more harm.

There are no rules in war. When my father fought in the second world war women were not touched. When we drop a bomb now, we unleash untold brutality on the very people we want to protect. Other people who are suffering are women, children and the elderly. Serbians and Albanians are losing their homes.

If we do not try to do things differently, we will continue to have the same results, more cruelty and more brutality. We will go farther and farther away from peace.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset that United Nations Secretary General Annan said recently that diplomacy sometimes cannot work without the threat of force. Unfortunately we are now in the position where having started this course of action we need to follow it through.

As the hon. member correctly and eloquently points out, terrible things are happening as a result. Unfortunately in the name of humanitarianism and in the name of what we think is right, we need to do these kinds of things to ensure that security ultimately is brought to that part of Europe and to the world in general. I support that and I think most Canadians do.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the question is at what cost? We agree that the atrocities have to stop. The hon. member talks about staying the course. It seems to me that we have to define what the course is and where we are

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going. If we get ourselves involved in a war, how are we going to extricate ourselves from that war?

It is almost as if the Canadian government and other NATO partners are making policy on the fly. Canadians were led to believe that the air strikes would be successful within a matter of days. The days have turned into weeks and soon the weeks will turn into months. We are talking about sending in ground troops now. There is an assumption that once we send in ground troops, Canadian soldiers, the war will be won at some point if we stay the course.

That is the same type of thinking which took place not so many years ago in southeast Asia when the Americans went into Vietnam. The Americans thought the war would be over in the short term but the weeks turned into months, the months turned into years and the years turned into the deaths of—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that we as the Government of Canada along with our NATO partners tried very hard to get a negotiated settlement. We worked diligently to that end for that objective. At the end of the day when we saw the kinds of atrocities that were taking place and the kind of humanitarian upheaval, it was important that we act in the way we are now doing to ensure that we bring peace in that area. It seems to me that we have gone to great lengths to ensure that.

We are not in a time of instant gratification and instant war starting and stopping. We have to take our time to ensure the right thing and ensure that people and families in that part of the world are protected.

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am paraphrasing but someone once said that for evil to succeed it just takes good men doing nothing. I see this in this situation.

Canadians are not used to conflict that is internal, inside a boundary of one jurisdiction or one state. This is what we have here, something that is quite different from what we see in Canada as we live together with different cultures, ethnicities and religions.

• (2030 )

My question is about the human security agenda, something we talked about and are now seeing in action. I welcome comments from the hon. member.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, human security is the key in all of this and is part of the objective of not only Canada but the NATO partners. It is important that we move in that direction to ensure security and stability in a part of the world that has not seen it for many years throughout the century.

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If we can do our part in that area we will have served well not only our country but the world in that area.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as one of our colleagues put it, there are no winners in a war. War means untold suffering, the loss of human lives, destruction and devastation on all sides.

As our colleague from Halifax West so eloquently pointed out, most of us are torn apart by the necessity to resort to weapons for a cause we feel is just, while at the same time realizing that it was brought upon by the revolting genocide going on in Kosovo, where every passing day brings sad pictures of massacres of thousands of innocents victims, mostly women and children.

Given its tradition of peace and the fact that pluralism is one of its central policies and values, Canada must play a major role in the search for a solution for Kosovo.

[*English*]

Indeed Canada joined the NATO operation with the central aim of seeking a peaceful resolution of the atrocities in Kosovo and of returning the Kosovars to a normal life in their own homes.

[*Translation*]

Our central objective here, in this debate, should be to look for this same solution, eventual peace, so that NATO's current operations can be replaced by sustainable peace measures to restore some form of normal life for the Kosovars.

Canada can play an important role in this respect.

[*English*]

It is crucial for us in Canada and for Canada within NATO and the broader international community to maintain an autonomous mind strictly directed toward the establishment of a peaceful solution. Military solutions as much as they may be necessary are never real and complete solutions.

Canada has a lasting tradition as a peace seeker, as a peacemaker, as an initiator of international peacekeeping through the United Nations. Canada must use its undoubted credibility as a peacemaker and peace seeker to play a leadership role in initiating proposals for early peaceful solutions.

As a non-European country, as a traditional honest broker in resolving international conflicts, Canada must follow its own wise counsel and be proactive, if necessary, sometimes even in contradiction with the U.S. and the Pentagon generals whose operation the NATO intervention has increasingly become.

• (2035 )

I ask this question. Does the solution pass through Russia and a constructive Russian intervention in the Kosovo issue? If Russia were involved, prospects for settlement would be far less difficult and would certainly be speedier to achieve. Indeed Russia may represent the surest chance of achieving an effective ceasefire and an eventual peace guaranteed by peacekeeping and the resettlement of the Kosovars in their own homes. Russian participation would eliminate a roadblock within the UN. Russia, if it participated, might influence China to take a more positive stance at the UN security council. Canada should take the lead in enlisting Russian participation, inciting Russia to play a key part in bringing Yugoslavia to accept Rambouillet or a similar accord.

One obvious difficulty in establishing a peacekeeping force in Kosovo is the refusal of Yugoslavia to accept a NATO force. If a peacekeeping force were to include a strong Russian presence, it may go a long way to influencing Yugoslavia to accept it. Even if it meant NATO countries contributing to such participation, it would still be a thousand times preferable to the alternative of military operations continuing on a larger scale.

[*Translation*]

As far as the conduct of NATO's operations is concerned, it is important that Canada maintain enough flexibility and autonomy. While the United States and some European nations support expanding the operations' scope to include ground troops, Canada should stick to its initial commitment, which was to send in from 600 to 800 military personnel, but only in a peacekeeping capacity and after a formal agreement was reached to put an end to the operations and make sure that the Kosovars can go back home.

[*English*]

I think we all agree that military operations are a last resort, that peaceful solutions must be the central collective goal of all of us. Canada is a nation of peace and freedom. In seeking freedom itself for others it must believe that freedom is best achieved in achieving peace.

This is what we must seek tonight. I would earnestly ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs and my government to do everything possible to enlist the help of the Russians to make a peace settlement possible and to lift the United Nations blockade. I hope that peace happens very soon in Kosovo.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because I know there are many who have comments and questions. I thank the hon. member for his very thoughtful remarks and his approach to this tragic situation.

This past weekend I attended a meeting in Vancouver hosted by End the Arms Race, over 300 deeply concerned people from many different walks of life including students, church leaders, labour



activists and others. There was a lot of wisdom in that group. They were calling for an end to the bombing, an end to the ethnic cleansing and a return to negotiations.

Does the hon. member agree that it would be a valuable and important initiative by the Government of Canada to convene a meeting at an early date of civil society, of key partners from the church community and from the labour movement? I know Canadian Auto Workers has issued a very important statement with a number of concrete suggestions on how we might approach the situation. Today the Canadian Federation of Students issued a similar statement.

• (2040)

There is not just wisdom within the military and in the House. There is a lot of wisdom in the country, in civil society. It would be a valuable and important exercise to convene on an urgent basis a gathering in Canada of groups such as that to seek alternatives to the present approach which is merely, according to NATO, reaffirming today more bombing and more air attacks.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, Canada is in a unique position to take a leadership role whether within NATO, whether at the United Nations, whether in the broader community of Canada or whatever we do. If this is one way whereby we can bring civil society together to seek solutions, I would certainly be 100 per cent for it.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my learned colleague for the message he brought to the House and indeed his colleague who spoke before him.

When we hear the news, as all Canadians have, we hear mention of the Serbian army and then the Serbian police. Obviously both are involved in this conflict. It would seem to me they are involved for different reasons.

I attempted to distinguish between them and all I could gather was that the Serbian police were a specially selected, specially trained SWAT team. From the information I can get many of the atrocities are associated with the police.

If this is the case and we bring it to a conclusion, will it be more difficult to attach blame to the police rather than the military?

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, as much as I am flattered by my colleague's faith in my judgment on these issues, I must say in all humility that I just do not know. I believe all the elements in society within Yugoslavia that have participated in genocide of any kind, in massacres or in disruption of people's lives on a massive scale should be brought to justice, whomever they may be.

I cannot say whether the blame is with the police or the army. I do not know enough about it from this distance to make a

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pronouncement, but I believe after this is settled the culprits should be brought to justice.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to associate myself with some of the comments made by the hon. member. I would like to elicit his views on the subject of sending NATO ground troops into Kosovo. In my respectful submission it would be a terrible mistake to involve NATO and Canadian soldiers in a ground war that could result in the loss of many lives not only on the NATO side but also on the Serbian side.

What are the hon. member's views with respect to the sending in of ground troops? Would he not agree that it is important for parliament to send a very clear message that it does not support a ground war in Kosovo?

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, I mentioned during my speech that my position was clearly that we should stand by the commitment already made by our country. We would send a few hundred troops only if a peace settlement is achieved, if a ceasefire is achieved, a guaranteed ceasefire under a guaranteed agreement. Canada should move in purely for peacekeeping purposes and not send troops. I do not agree that the NATO operation should be enlarged by sending troops of any kind into Yugoslavia.

• (2045)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, as I rise in the House this evening, I pray for all our military personnel serving abroad, as part of NATO's allied forces, and for all of those who are affected by this military conflict, or should I say by this war.

It is a real shame that this liberal government, the so-called government of openness and accountability, is merely holding another one of these take note debates, at a time when this country and its NATO allies are involved in an armed conflict against Yugoslavia in Kosovo. We should have a real parliamentary debate, followed by a motion put to the House. This would give the government a mandate to deal with this conflict and allow the Canadian forces to wage this fight properly.

I think the job of the defence critic for the opposition is to hold the government of Canada responsible for its actions. In this case, it is to avoid needless losses of human lives.

The Liberal government has decided on a foreign policy of "soft power" at the expense of military equipment of "firm power" and has said to the Canadian people direct threats against Canada and Canadian interests no longer exist.

Well, I have some news for the people sitting in the first rows. First, perhaps their foreign policy is appropriate for signing a treaty on antipersonnel mines, but it is not appropriate for dealing with

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such people as Milosevic and his government, who kill their own people and then lay antipersonnel mines to keep Kosovars within borders and NATO outside.

Second, the world is sometimes a jungle and dictators are not afraid to use force.

Third, all out wars, such as the second world war, may happen only once or twice a century, but unfortunately they happen.

Fourth, small scale wars, regional wars and civil wars are far more frequent.

Fifth, there is nothing new about civil wars, which I would like to point out to the historian from Princeton who was surprised by the brutality of Milosevic after years of tragedy in Bosnia.

This government did not take the history of international relations into account and acted in a criminal fashion by neglecting Canada's defence, for which it is responsible. The defence of the realm is a government's primary duty.

We have here in front of us the Liberal government that cancelled, for purely partisan purposes, a highly needed program, namely the EH-101 helicopter acquisition program. It is the Liberal government that sent Canadians to be taken hostage in the former Yugoslavia. It is the Liberal government that does not put bread on the table of military families.

It is the Liberal government that sends teams on search and rescue missions in Labrador helicopters and, when they do not come back, tries to take benefits away from widows and children.

So do not think for one minute that we will let the government take action blindly in Kosovo and in the sky over Yugoslavia, where a larger number of Canadian lives are in danger. The Liberal defence and military management policy has given Canadians Hong Kong and Dieppe, and the list could grow.

But now that we have been forced to take action by Mr. Milosevic, NATO must wage a war that it must win. We are not dealing with nice people in Yugoslavia. They are brutal and cunning adversaries who will stop at nothing to get their way and who have absolutely no respect for human life and human dignity.

• (2050)

NATO has committed to a battle from which it cannot withdraw unless it is victorious. Withdrawal at this time would have major repercussions.

But what is NATO's strategy? What is the strategic objective of NATO? Can we attain the goals NATO and this government have set?

Mr. Milosevic is cleansing Kosovo, and he is in the process of attaining his own strategic objective. His regime is intact and we have not yet seen the strongest elements of his military machine in action against NATO. He is saving them for later. He does not

appear to be ready to give up, and western journalists report that he has the support of the people.

What is our objective? To put an end to the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, to force Milosevic to pull out his military and paramilitary forces, to get the Kosovar refugees back to their homes and to guarantee their safety under the Rambouillet accord and thanks to the intervention of soldiers responsible for imposing and maintaining peace?

NATO wants to do this with a progressively implemented air campaign, but we have been at this for nearly three weeks now. Have we managed to attain either of the goals in question? Probably not. NATO's declared objective is not being concretized through air strikes.

Historically, the Battle of Britain and the raids on Dresden notwithstanding, it is not air strength that wins wars. According to the NATO supreme commander directing this operation, General Clark, the bombardment will not put an end to ethnic cleansing. The chiefs of staff in Washington share that same point of view: NATO's air strength will not be successful in making the Yugoslav government listen to reason.

[English]

I have some advice. It is advice which is very simple. We should define an achievable strategic objective that will put an end to this human tragedy. We must find the means to do so. We must be prepared to answer questions in the House. We should look at the state of the Canadian forces and we should fulfil the requirements set down in the 1994 white paper.

The Canadian forces are well trained, well motivated and have a history which is second to none, but they lack key equipment, in particular the army. This government cut military personnel and the defence budget to the bone. If Canadians are needlessly killed as a result of government negligence, then this government will be held accountable.

The present government defined its defence policy with the 1994 white paper, which committed Canada to the maintenance of a modern, combat capable, land, sea and air force to deal with operations across the spectrum of combat.

In terms of implementing our national security objectives the government directed the Canadian forces to provide a joint task force headquarters and one or more of the following: an able task group of four major service combatants, one support ship and maritime air support, three separate battle groups or a brigade group, a fighter wing and a transport squadron, and all this for a grand total of 10,000 personnel at any one time.

The intent was to have the vanguard of this joint task force in place within three weeks and the entire force operational within three months. This was done having a regular force of 60,000 personnel. Can we do this today? Probably not. If part III estimates

for 1999-2000 are to be trusted we are going to be below 60,000 next year.

• (2055 )

In terms of the navy, the government stated that there was an urgent need for new maritime helicopters to replace the aging Sea King. Five years later we have not even heard a call for tenders, not even a statement of requirement. That is the Liberal definition of urgent.

The government stated that it would consider replacing old operational support vessels. We have not heard a thing about Sealift since.

Canada's army was promised three adequately equipped brigade groups and some 3,000 more soldiers in three light infantry battalions.

The white paper called for new armoured personnel carriers to replace the obsolete M-13 fleet.

There was also a discussion in very loose terms on the future replacement of direct fire support vehicles. There was no mention of a new main battle tank to replace the obsolete Leopard. An army without a main battle tank will not survive in combat. That is the end of that story.

The army has received most of its new armoured personnel carriers in the form of the LAV-25. We have enough of those for a good armoured reconnaissance regiment.

The three light battalions were created with about 3,000 soldiers. However, they are threatened all the time by cuts.

The air force was promised an upgrade of the CF-18 fighter aircraft fleet. That is happening, although the government wants to deny it every time we hear of yet another Sea King emergency landing.

The CF-18s have received their precision guided munitions, but the air force lost its in-air refuelling tankers and received no new airlift capabilities. As of today Canada lacks both strategic sealift and airlift capabilities and thus is forced to rent these items on the open market or be dependent upon the United States for any large military operation.

The lack of power projection capability is the Canadian forces' biggest problem, after money of course. That is the central issue. The white paper must be implemented if we are to project our forces abroad effectively in support of foreign policy objectives, including Kosovo.

Unfortunately, if the Kosovo conflict moves to the next phase, it is likely that we will see NATO ground troops. If that is the case, then the government will have to take a long and hard look at the

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NATO plan and whether Canada has forces that are properly trained and equipped for ground action.

In terms of ground operations, there are a number of issues that need examination by parliament prior to deployment. For instance, what are the objectives of the campaign? To create a safe area within Kosovo? To partition Kosovo and Yugoslavia? Or to invade Yugoslavia? How long does NATO make a commitment to stay? How do NATO troops, our troops, get into Kosovo considering the geographic realities of the Balkans and the lack of infrastructure in either Albania or Macedonia? Will we send a significant contingent, perhaps a battalion size group, or no troops at all?

We do not know what the national command relationship will be. What are the rules of engagement? We do not know how we will get our troops over to Kosovo because we have no real sealift or airlift capabilities. How will we sustain them in Kosovo? We do not know which units of the Canadian forces will be sent, if any, and whether they are trained for the mission before them. That is very important.

Let us remember the criticisms of the Somalia mission and the criticisms that the inquiry directed at the Canadian predeployment to Somalia. This deployment to Kosovo could make Somalia look like a Sunday school picnic.

Are we sending composite units that have never worked with each other before? Are they all from one brigade group? What size of contingent is going to Kosovo? Will we send more CF-18s over to Italy to back up our ground troops and the soon to be increased operational tempo? Where are the relief or reinforcements going to come from?

Will we also maintain our forces in Bosnia? Or does this mean that this is the end of the Bosnian commitment?

I point to the recently released Conference of Defence Associations' strategic assessment that questioned Canada's army organization and our ability to sustain our Bosnian forces. They said that as the army is now configured, it uses every resource at its disposal just to maintain that Bosnia commitment.

• (2100 )

Are we going to reorganize the army to better deal with these long term commitments or are we going to maintain our current core configuration and trade one taxing commitment for another that experts claim is destroying the Canadian army? I think Canadians want to know the answer to these questions and many more prior to further deployments with our NATO allies and further escalation of this conflict.

To clear up a couple of points that we had earlier, in 1990-91 there were three debates in the House, and two of them were before a shot was fired. No one can say that it is the same situation. These were all votes. We got this out of *Hansard* so it is very clear that this happened before.

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**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the member's debate. I want to make a couple of comments and ask the member a question, which does not really deal with the history but deals with the emotional aspect of the situation.

In the fall of 1997 I had the privilege to visit Bosnia with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I saw firsthand the consequences of that war on the lives of the people and on the environment. It was a travesty to the human condition, one that we must act against.

NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia is aimed at bringing an end to atrocities against civilians in Kosovo by diminishing the capacities of the Yugoslav army. The military objective of NATO has humanitarian or political consequences. Although the air strikes are planned with the utmost care to avoid civilian casualties, they nonetheless occur. We see this.

I ask the member how do I respond to so many of my constituents who in the main are eastern European, many of them from Serbia? How do I speak to them about this issue at present?

**Mr. David Price:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. I guess it was more of a statement, a statement I can follow along with.

I was also in Bosnia. I had a chance to talk to the people there, to tour with our troops and to see the terrific job they are doing. When I look at what happened in Bosnia it brings it very close to home for myself. The area of Bosnia that Canadians are patrolling right now is very similar to my home area, the eastern townships, in the way the grounds are laid out. It is very interesting to look at the fields with nothing planted in them. They are all mined. I look at the job the Canadian troops are doing there to try to get people back to a normal way of life.

We are talking about a different situation in Kosovo. We have to look very clearly at that and what our troops can do. All we have talked about in the House, and we never voted on that, is a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. If we are going to do anything else at this point, it has to come to a vote.

**Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague with great interest. I was baffled with the way he historically rhymed off some figures. He talked about Hong Kong. He talked about Dieppe. Now he says if they do not behave, we are going to go in there.

I wonder if my hon. colleague remembers which side of the allies the Serbian people were on. I wonder if he remembers or if he knows that these people might have been under Hitler at that time and they were impoverished. They were under the German boot. Can he tell me if he remembers which side they were supporting? Was it the partisans not only of Serbia, but the partisans in Italy, or

the partisans in France, or the partisans in Greece? I could go on and on. He mentioned nothing about it.

● (2105 )

The member talked about the Battle of Britain. Has my hon. colleague dismissed all the people under hardship during that period of our history, or has he simply chosen to ignore them?

My hon. colleague talked about our ability to keep sending troops in and how they are undernourished and what the troops do not have. Has my hon. friend across the way a sense of dignity to say that we must act and act in peace without sending bombs in, but get the people back to the negotiating table, or has he forgotten that part of history too?

**Mr. David Price:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question, but I am not really sure what he said or asked. I find what he is talking about to be completely irrelevant. It is his government that authorized the bombing. I do not understand where he is coming from. The hon. member is not very clear.

I made references to the disasters we have had before to come to the point that we do not end up with another disaster of the type that we had in Dieppe or Hong Kong and so on. So I do not understand.

There is a long history in Yugoslavia on both sides. They have gone both ways all through their history. It goes back at least 600 years and I am sure it goes back farther than that.

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will make a comment and ask a question.

I listened to the hon. member's presentation. A good portion of it covered our military in terms of equipment. He talked about the Sea Kings and about replacements. I truly empathize with what he said. We should not in any way put our military in danger whether it is rescue or military services on the ground.

When he did touch upon the debate before us today he spoke specifically about there having to be a war. He talked about "a rise in his popularity at home" in referring to Milosevic. I would like to comment on that. How did this individual's popularity rise? There have been killings on both sides, including innocent children and people on the Serb side. We must admit that, irrespective of what CNN says. When somebody sees their children, brothers or nephews being killed, they might not like Milosevic, but they are going to bond together. Unfortunately this is what is happening. That is why I believe his popularity has gone. I do not know if the member agrees or not.

About the second point that there has to be war, why must there be war when right now we are seeking a political solution in my view? In order to seek this political solution, does the member agree that the Russians have to come to the table and the

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Americans must find the will? Does he agree with this to really move forward?

**Mr. David Price:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the member on the point of how Milosevic is becoming more and more popular because of the conflict. It has helped his situation.

The other question was about why there should be war. I would like to know what the Minister of Foreign Affairs has done at the security council. That is a question we asked today. We find at this point that there does not seem to be any results, nothing solid out there. The minister has talked a lot, but he has not come back to the House to tell us exactly what he did to try to stop this situation, to try to move things ahead further.

On the war situation, Milosevic has declared war on NATO. So, like it or not, we happen to be at war.

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague opposite that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was at the security council within the past month on a human security agenda. He was trying to get exactly this issue, the rights of civilians during this type of activity on the agenda.

• (2110)

I want to go back to the litany of shortcomings in equipment that I heard during the hon. member's speech.

The reality is that the places that are housing and caring for all the displaced people right now, Albania, Bosnia, Turkey and Croatia, all these places with hundreds of thousands of displaced people do not have a lot of resources. Indeed they have so few resources that the large volume of refugees in their areas could potentially destabilize their countries.

I want to ask the hon. member opposite what his view would be on Canada's participation, maybe not today but in the near future, after this goes, to help the economies of those countries facing this crisis that is thrust upon them right now. What would his view be on making the humanitarian effort on the ground? That is the debate today. It is not a debate on helicopters and equipment—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. member. The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead, a short response.

**Mr. David Price:** Mr. Speaker, I would quickly answer by asking about the minister's supposed trip to the security council. If he did go, I am wondering why he has not made a report to the foreign affairs committee to explain exactly what he has done there to try to help the situation.

On the other side, what is important here is it is strange that last week the government offered \$100 million to help out the refugees and now all of a sudden, it is renegeing on the deal. That is where we could be helping out. Those refugees need help. That money could

be spent over there. Now is when they need it, not later on. These people are dying now.

**Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to split my time with my hon. colleague from Scarborough Centre.

A lot of the members today came here with prepared speeches. A lot of the members came here today pretending that they know the history of Bosnia. Well, to my hon. colleagues who pretend that they know the history of Bosnia, to my hon. colleagues who have travelled to Yugoslavia and to Kosovo and who say they know the Balkan history, I say to them that they have another think coming.

That part of the world has been in turmoil not for the last 50 years and not for the last 100 years, but we should say for the last millennium. Since history has been recorded, that part of the world has had atrocities done on both sides by all kinds of people. The atrocities happening there have been by both sides. It is not something new.

I can quote text and verse from 50 years ago, from 100 years ago, from 200 years ago, the history of what has happened in that part of the world. It was the Ottoman empire. Before that there was the Byzantine empire. Before that was the Roman empire.

For my hon. colleagues who say that they know about Balkan history because they have visited Bosnia, I say go read the history and do not be ignorant.

I want to share a couple of e-mails I received from people who are in the midst of this turmoil.

A lady from Kitchener wrote "If we, Canada, send in ground troops to attack Yugoslavia, does that mean we are going to declare war on Yugoslavia? If yes, are the Canadian born Serbs and Serb immigrants going to be arrested as enemies and threats to Canadian security? I am asking this because this happened to Germans and Japanese during World War I and World War II".

A lot of the people whom I have met from that part of the world say if they walk down the street and say that they are Serbian, people throw bad remarks at them.

Somebody from Quebec wrote "I believe that Canada should build a safe world, creating world peace, security and a prosperous world for our children and to secure international order, to protect international law and the role of the UN".

Somebody from New York City wrote to me. He said "Since missiles do not choose their victims, children, young and old people have been killed". A civilian train was bombed off its rails today. Last night there was the killing of nine and injuring of 17.

• (2115)

I will continue with another individual who wrote to say that both sides have refugees. It is not only on one side, but there are

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also the refugees from Yugoslavia who are in Hungary right now. He quotes "She came to Budapest with her children about 12 days ago. She was paying for their shelter, as many other Yugoslavs".

I want to continue with a letter I received from a constituent who told me he came from Russia and that he was proud to be a Canadian. He wrote that the day he became a Canadian citizen was one of the most remembered days in his life. He said he could not recall a single occasion, prior to this event, when his answer, "I am from Canada", would not bring a friendly smile on the face of any airport clerk or fellow traveller through all eastern and western Europe. He said his feeling of becoming a Canadian citizen, a full member of a peaceful, tolerant and wise society respected all around the world, was overwhelming.

He closed his letter by saying "In the name of our future, the future of Canada and the future of the world, I beg you to stop this madness".

I will continue on with an E-mail I received from another constituent. He tells me that as a Serbian Canadian he is deeply concerned over the recent action of the government against Yugoslavia. He feels that not only was this action taken in contravention of international law thereby setting a dangerous precedent with far-reaching consequences of international relations, but it is also in deep contradiction with Canada's allotted role as a peace loving and peacekeeping nation.

I have a letter from another constituent who says that we do not need anybody's human losses. She wants us to help the refugees, the Serbians and Albanians, and to bring peace politically.

That part of the world is in turmoil. NATO acted because NATO thought it had to act. I am not going to sit here and say NATO did good or NATO did bad. The one thing, however, is that it chose to act this time. NATO disrespected acting in previous times. NATO did not act when the island of Cyprus was invaded. NATO did nothing. It sat on its chair when genocide was happening in Rwanda. It does nothing today in Kurdistan, in that eastern part of Turkey where people are being prosecuted just as badly.

I have about 6,000 Tamils in my riding. They sent me a copy of a letter that went to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils. They write in the letter that the civil war in Sri Lanka not only predates the Kosovo conflict by more than a decade, but also has claimed many more lives, more than 75,000. They say that just like the Albanians fleeing the Serbian onslaught, over 700 Tamils fled when the Sinhalese army, after a bloody military campaign, occupied the Jaffna peninsula.

They close their letter by saying that they are not asking the hon. minister to bomb or use military force against the Sri Lankan racist

government as in the case of Yugoslavia. They are simply asking the hon. minister to exert pressure on the Sri Lankan government to withdraw the Sinhalese armed forces from the Tamil homeland and seek a political solution to the ethnic conflict.

Both groups on both sides are making comments. Both groups on both sides believe they are right. It does not matter where the conflict is in the world, whether it be the conflict between my home country of Greece and Turkey, or Cyprus and the invading armies, whether they are Serbians or Rwandans, whether the conflict is here in Canada or it in America about 140 years ago, the fact of the matter is that NATO has chosen to go in.

We are supposedly bombing military targets, but there is overwhelming evidence that this is not the case. One has to ask why we are there. Are we there because we have a particular interest or are we there because we are the world policemen? If we are the world policemen, will we continue tomorrow, or is this a one time event? Will we go on from here? Will we go into Sri Lanka? Will we ask the government of Turkey to stop oppressing the people of Kurdistan, its own province? Will we ask all oppressing governments to do this or did we just choose to go to Yugoslavia because of different reasons?

Last week I had the opportunity of meeting with people.

• (2120 )

Last week I received 15,000 signatures on a petition from a community in Toronto. The petition was addressed to the House of Commons and party assembled. It reads, "We the undersigned residents of Canada draw to the attention of the House the following: that the Canadian government is blindly following the careless and dangerous U.S.-NATO policy of bombing the sovereign country of Yugoslavia and the Serbian people; that such policy sets dangerous precedents and could only open the door for foreign intervention in internal affairs of nations of minorities; and, that violence will not resolve the Kosovar problem but rather it facilitates the further entrenchment of the forces on both sides. We do not want to see the residents of Kosovo live in peace and harmony".

I am not saying that the policy of bombing military installations is right or wrong. I am supportive of our troops over there. However, when we get reports that civilians have been hurt it brings to mind a view that yes, we might be at war but are we doing the right thing. The children of the world must live in peace. It does not matter if they are Kosovars, Serbians, Cypriots, Tamils, or Sinhalese.

I will support whatever action is needed in order to bring peace to the world. I will support whatever action is needed to make sure that our children, and God bless us all, live in peace.

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To those men and women who are serving over there, as the Government of Canada has asked them to do, I applaud and support them. I say to them, "when you do your work, please make sure you do not kill innocent people".

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have received confirmation from the office of the Minister of National Defence that the U.S. does in fact use depleted uranium in their chain gun on their A-10s.

I want to read a quote by Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Centre and a contributing author of a book entitled *Medal of Dishonor: How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers and Civilians with DU Weapons*. She states, "The use of A-10 Warthogs with DU shells threaten to make a nuclear wasteland of Kosovo. The Pentagon is laying waste the very people along with their children that they claim to be saving. This is another reason for fighting to end the attack on Yugoslavia".

Does the hon. member have any concerns about the fact that depleted uranium is being used on the weapons that are currently being deployed in Kosovo?

**Mr. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing that to the attention of the House. I have read about this in approximately 30 e-mails that have come to me. I seem to be the focus for e-mails and have received over 8,000 in the last week or so.

I can only confirm that statement by what I read from a university professor in the European city of Saloniki in Greece. He said that this will not only have an effect in Kosovo and in Serbia but it will also spread into FYROM and to Greece. I am really concerned with the situation.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, uranium bullets have been used in military hardware by all sides for many years. It is because the uranium is heavy and gets higher penetration. We should put that aside because it is a red herring in this debate.

I listened very carefully to the member's speech and I appreciated everything he said. Does he see any parallels, any relationships, between what is happening to the Albanians in Kosovo to what happened to the Armenians in 1915 as a result of Turkey and the first world war?

**Mr. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his particular question. I would give him the following answer. If NATO or a similar organization had existed at that time I wish it had acted. However, there was an organization that did go in to help. The only thing it did was uproot the people and drive them out of their homes. It caused the Ottoman Empire to inflict more harm on the people than it would have done. Maybe what NATO is doing today is similar to that time.

• (2125)

We have seen how many refugees were coming out of Kosovo before NATO struck. After NATO struck, the number of refugees coming out jumped and quadrupled. After watching television last night and seeing refugees in FYROM, the former Yugoslavian Macedonian Republic, behind barbed wire, it brought haunting images back to my mind of when I visited Dachau in Munich at the age of five.

I say to my friends that peace is the one thing that we must work for. We should not put aside the use of uranium.

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for sharing his time with me.

Today as I stand to participate in this debate let me just say from the outset that it is a very sad moment. When we, as representatives, go to the people during campaigns, we go to the people promising to improve our society, improve our nation, take care of the deficit, create jobs and improve the future for our children. We often say, for example, that our youth is our future. If we indeed believe in that then today I say with great sadness that we are killing that future whether it is here in Canada or somewhere in Europe, in Serbia or in Kosovo.

I want to participate in the debate by going through some of the events that have occurred over the past couple of months in the House and in committee.

In a joint session not too long ago of the Senate and the House of Commons, we had representatives from the United States, specifically Mr. Robert McNamara, former U.S. defense secretary; General Lee Butler, former commander in chief of the U.S. defense; and Dr. Thomas Graham, Director of International Security Programs, Rockefeller Foundation.

They wished they could have known then what they know today when they were spearheading the U.S. activity and effort in Vietnam. They came to Canada today to applaud us on our initiative and our report in terms of ridding society of all the nuclear warheads that are out there.

I hate to see what people like General Wesley Clark and others are going to say maybe 20 years down the road. Are they going to come to Ottawa and say "what a grave mistake we made back then with the Kosovar situation?"

The people in Kosovo, like any other people on this globe, deserve to live in peace. They deserve to raise their children. They deserve to give their youth the opportunity that my children and so many other children have here and all over the world.

It was sad when my colleague mentioned seeing the barbed wire that I also saw. It brought back images of some documentaries I

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saw about the holocaust. I said that this was another holocaust happening. There were people in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia having cellular phones passed over to them so they could get in touch with their relatives to see if indeed their lives could improve.

I told Mr. Aragona in the foreign affairs committee a little while ago that being in Europe was their responsibility. My colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt touched on the fact that unless one knows the people, the history, the diversity and what happened 200 or 300 years ago, it is difficult to address the problem. I refer to 1994 when the military came before a joint committee to give us an update of what was happening in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

• (2130)

What did our military say? It said it was not sure if the Croats were killing the Croats and blaming it on the other guys, or if the Serbs were killing the Serbs and blaming it on the other guys, or if the Muslims were killing the Muslims and blaming it on the other guys. General MacKenzie to this very day is admitting this. There is confusion as to who was doing what.

I am upset that unfortunately these atrocities are happening today. My colleague touched upon the early 1900s and how sad it was the way we started this century. Now we are starting to use the words genocide and ethnic cleansing, et cetera. We started the century with the ethnic cleansing that took place in the early 1900s.

Earlier another colleague talked about the middle of the century and the genocide of the Jews, sadly. Here we are about to close the century with what? More genocide and more ethnic cleansing. What a shame to all of us who live on the planet including me.

We talked about Rwanda. I want to take this opportunity to show the leadership taken by this country and this Prime Minister. He did not hesitate for a moment. He took the bull by the horns to address that horrible situation. Later they said they should have done more. It was as Mr. MacNamara and General Lee Butler said: "Gee, we erred back in Vietnam".

Earlier my colleague from the Conservative Party said that there must be war and I asked him why. There is a political solution. If the will is there we can find a solution.

As I suggested earlier and will suggest now, I firmly believe that the United States has to work to bring the Russians to the table. They can provide leadership, given the alliances and relationships with the Serbian people historically. It is an opportunity now.

I heard the Serbian deputy prime minister on television not too long ago say "Please stop the bombing; we want to talk". Why are we not calling them out on that? Maybe he is misleading us all. Who knows? Given the loss of life on both sides, why do we not

bring them to the table to see what their intentions are? If they are prepared to deal in good faith then let us advance it in a positive way. If they are not and they renege then I believe we should consolidate with the Europeans and all the Balkan regions.

I am glad my colleague from Hamilton put me at ease. When I heard about the uranium I was concerned, not because of the people in Serbia but because of the people in Italy, France, Greece, Albania and all over that region.

When Mr. Aragona, head of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, was before the foreign affairs committee, I asked him a few questions which I will repeat in the House. By moving in as aggressively as we are, I believe we are setting a very dangerous precedent. We know there are other hot spots around the globe today. We see what is happening with the Basque region. We see what is happening in northern Italy with the separatist movement. We see what is happening in Corsica. I heard on the news that up until about eight months ago the CIA had the KLA on a terrorist list. Maybe it has changed. Maybe it has been baptised. I hope it has but I do not know.

Let us try to hypothesize. What happens if bombs go off in Corsica or in the Basque region and innocent people are killed? Does that mean that NATO will suddenly move in and bomb these people? I hope not.

We are setting a dangerous precedent. NATO is showing today that it is not listening. When it was trying to sort out an agreement in France all I heard was Madeleine Albright saying "We are going to bomb". Who is "we"? Is it the United States or NATO? Why was Mr. Solana not the spokesperson on behalf of NATO? With the Americans it seems to be Dodge City and *Gunsmoke* all over again: shoot first and ask questions later.

I support my government. It is trying to do the right thing. As the Prime Minister said earlier today, not to choose is wrong. We must choose. We as Canadians have set an example, historically speaking. We have been in Cyprus. We have been all over the world. We have a reputation, as a colleague from the Conservative Party said, second to none. We owe it today to that reputation to once again spearhead an effort to find a political solution for the benefit of all these people.

• (2135)

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I started out by thinking that the member was for the government. Then in the rest of the speech I was sure that he was opposed to what the government was doing, but he ended by saying that he supported what the government was doing.

I have a real problem. What the government has decided to do, and we have agreed with it, is to bomb and I believe possibly today the foreign affairs minister has agreed that if necessary we might



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put in ground troops. Does the hon. member agree or disagree with what the government will do?

**Mr. John Cannis:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who sits with me on the foreign affairs committee knows very well where I stand on these issues.

I merely took this opportunity to outline some of the dangers in this approach. NATO has decided, spearheaded by the United States initiative, to use these types of tactics. I am simply saying I feel that there was some room to take the agenda a bit forward.

I do not believe that we have exhausted every possibility. I believe that by taking the moves we did we in essence allowed Milosevic to consolidate support. As the member mentioned earlier he has gained popularity unwarranted. When I saw earlier on television the youth from Serbia standing there as human shields and demonstrating I was sad. Instead of those youths holding high school, college or university in their hands, they are holding up target images. I think mothers and fathers should be busy providing for households.

If these are the tactics that are unfolding, so be it, but I believe there is a political solution.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the very passionate remarks of the member opposite. I know he has a great interest in the issue and has spoken articulately about what he believes should happen.

To that end does the hon. member feel these messages are getting through to the foreign affairs minister, a member of his government? Have we done everything at the United Nations? Have we done everything at the security council to get this message across? Have we pursued every diplomatic end before taking these steps and participating in bombing missions that are going on as we speak?

All Canadians and all members of the House have seen the graphic pictures, the graphic images of which he spoke of children and the mass exodus of people being herded from their country and their ancient homes like sheep. I am sure those images conger up very passionate feelings not only in the member opposite but in all members.

Has the Minister of Foreign Affairs pursued every possible angle? Has the member opposite relayed those feelings to him directly?

**Mr. John Cannis:** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding from what I have heard and in briefings that the minister is doing everything within his power, within his means, and with whatever is available to him to make sure the Canadian message gets through.

I know my colleagues on this side are continuously putting forward various arguments. It is not as simple as black and white,

as I mentioned in my presentation. The foreign affairs minister and the minister of defence are trying everything possible to achieve a peaceful resolution of this unfortunate conflict.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party member asked our Liberal colleague an excellent question.

• (2140)

Since Canada decided, in a show of unity, to support the objectives pursued by NATO, should the allies decide to send ground troops, would the Canadian government endorse NATO's decision to immediately send 200,000 troops to Kosovo, yes or no?

[*English*]

**Mr. John Cannis:** Mr. Speaker, as I said to the member from the Conservative Party, we are undertaking every initiative to resolve the issue before we even get to that stage.

There are always contingency discussions unfolding. We would be silly and foolish not to think. They are always planning in advance what their next step will be. Today the military and the political arena are planning. What will happen tomorrow or a week or two down the road only God knows. Right now we are hoping for a peaceful resolution.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, late last month the House was informed by the foreign affairs minister and the defence minister that Canadian forces aircraft were involved in the operation in Kosovo. There was no debate. There was no motion. There was no vote. Again we had a take note debate. We really wonder who actually listens to take note debates.

The interest of this great country demanded that I put aside all the reservations I might have had about that air involvement, and my party and I supported it. Three weeks later here we are again discussing a possible commitment of Canadian forces without a votable motion.

I express my profound disappointment at the government's refusal yet again to take the high road and bring forth a motion to allow parliament to sit in committee of the whole and listen to expert witnesses, then allow parliament to debate that issue and finally end with a vote. That is what democracy is all about. That is what the Canadian people deserve when it comes to an issue of war. I am insulted and Canadians across the country should be outraged at the government's failure to respect simple democratic principles. We sell democracy around the world. Yet we fail to practise it in the House.

As of March 24 I supported the current mission. Having said that I too believe that the only resolution for the many problems of the Balkans is through negotiation. I concur with so much that has been said in the House this evening and this afternoon that

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involvement of the Russians is critical in settling the issue. Often in history one must go back to diplomacy, but usually one finds that diplomacy must be backed up with military power.

Once NATO committed itself to the solution of the Kosovar civil war and once it got into the Rambouillet peace talks, its credibility was put on the line. President Milosevic underestimated the resolve of the western alliance. As each day passes he increasingly desires a way out of the current confrontation with NATO. We will eventually be able to negotiate a settlement by keeping the pressure on. The best hope for long term peace in the region is to stay the course.

We should continue with air strikes to degrade the Yugoslavian military capabilities. Reports today say that is in fact happening, that it is running short of fuel, that it is running short of ammunition. That is good news for all of us and for the people of Kosovo.

To convince Belgrade of the wisdom of negotiation will be the diplomacy that is involved. Milosevic must be convinced that there is a real opportunity to negotiate and that he must be sincere if he returns to the negotiation table.

At this point in time and without further information I am not in favour of committing Canadian forces to a ground campaign in Kosovo. Canadians clearly want something to be done. The images of ethnic cleansing demand a response, but Canadians are also aware of the limitations of military capability.

• (2145)

There are many issues that the government and NATO need to address. I want to know what the actual objectives of such a campaign are and what the likely exit strategy would be if we were to go in with ground forces. I want to have some idea of the resistance the military is expected to face. I want to have a complete briefing on the potential casualties that we might suffer. I also want a strongly worded, sincere and public assurance that the Canadian forces are adequately equipped to do the job.

The auditor general and military experts have repeatedly pointed out the serious equipment problems faced by our land forces. These issues should be seriously and honestly addressed by both the defence minister and the chief of defence staff.

We are proud of our troops. We are proud of what they do, but I too, like some others in the House, have seen them in operation and feel sorry for them as they try to do their job with equipment that is less than adequate.

Most important of all, I want the government to clarify why we are in Kosovo. Why have we chosen Kosovo when there are 30 other places where ethnic cleansing is occurring?

I want to be able to look the Canadian people in the eye and say with total sincerity that I thought Canada's vital interests were best served by engaging in a ground war. I want to be able to tell Canadians that if some of their sons and daughters do not come back from such a mission the sacrifice was worthwhile.

To date I do not have answers to any of these questions. The government has not made a case for such an effort. It is the government's job to make such a case. From the Prime Minister on down the government seems indifferent and fails to deal with these very serious considerations.

The entire Kosovo effort is also somewhat unsettling in another perspective. In 1949 the country took an active role in creating the North Atlantic Alliance. At the end of this month we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of that alliance, but it is unclear to me exactly what we will be celebrating in less than three weeks' time.

The NATO engagement in operations over Yugoslavia does not seem to be the defensive alliance that we helped to create in 1949. Throughout the cold war the issues were admittedly much easier to understand. Things are not as clear in the post cold war era and nowhere is that perhaps more confusing than in the Balkans. Therefore, we should be hesitant about jumping too quickly into conflicts that are so very complex.

I am also concerned that NATO's actions today are damaging our long term relations with Russia. We cannot construct a new security order in Europe without the participation of a friendly and satisfied Russia. Russian involvement will allow Mr. Milosevic to allow an international force in Kosovo. Russian involvement will allow NATO to stop bombing and to say that the problem has been solved and an international force can take over.

I see Russia's involvement as being critical in this whole issue. It seems clear that NATO's actions are not perceived as being defensive by Moscow. In fact, they are seen as being very threatening.

We can dismiss as posturing much of the rhetoric now coming from Moscow. However, we must also look to the future and the day when Russia is much stronger. It will remember the disregard to its views that we are showing today.

The principal questions still remain unanswered. What is NATO becoming? Is it being transformed, first by the peace support operation in Bosnia and now by its mission in Kosovo?

• (2150)

The 1991 strategic concept declares explicitly:

The alliance is purely defensive in purpose: None of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defence, and it does not consider itself to be anyone's adversary.

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I do not think that anyone in this House today would argue that the civil war in Kosovo directly threatened any NATO member. If we accept the need to engage in this type of peacemaking, peace enforcement or humanitarian mission, where do we draw the line? In what region or in what conflict will we not intervene? What will be the priority list that we set?

I have a list of over 30 countries that have recently experienced ethnic cleansing in one form or another. We have turned a blind eye to almost all of them. In Chechnya nearly 100,000 people were killed. Should NATO have responded? In Sudan a war has been raging for 43 years and over one million people have been killed. Should NATO have responded? This past weekend in East Timor scores of people died. Will we ever forget the image in Indonesia last year of 2,000 Chinese businessmen and their families who were put inside automobiles and torched? Should NATO have been involved?

We cannot expect that NATO should try to solve all of the problems of the world. We really need to know what the limits of NATO's activities will be. I do not believe that Canadians want to support an alliance that repeatedly finds itself mired in local and regional conflicts. That is not the NATO we joined in 1949. I do not believe that such an alliance is sustainable in the long term. In my opinion we just do not have the human or economic resources to sustain such an effort.

Let me be perfectly clear. It is in Canada's vital interest to have a strong North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, but that alliance will only be seen to be legitimate if it is defensive. I do not see our people supporting NATO as a global policeman. As NATO intervenes it risks becoming a part of the problem.

The situation in Kosovo is a case in point. By linking NATO credibility to the peace settlement in Kosovo we have become a combatant in a regional conflict. It is a conflict the complexity of which I am not convinced the Liberal government fully understands.

One can only begin to understand the issue by becoming familiar with the history of the area. I am not at all certain that this is being done. Today we are being overwhelmed by images of Serbian atrocities in Kosovo, but these atrocities have occurred on all sides. We are angered and disgusted when we see these things, but we have to understand that this is nationalism, that it is 1,500 years old, that it is part of something much bigger than what we see simply on the surface. We seem to be creating a NATO protectorate and that may not be in the best interests of regional stability or in NATO's best interests. A protectorate over Kosovo might demand that we remain there for a long time.

Even if we resolve the current war, I feel that there are long term problems that we should be discussing. The question of the ethnic Albanian population in the southern Balkans is one we will likely

have to confront in the future. The highest birth rate in any part of the world is in that area.

Given that this war has likely raised national consciousness, can we really expect that the ethnic Albanians will not one day want to live together in a single state? That aim will pose a serious challenge for existing borders. If this were to happen Kosovo would only be a small part of what would become a very major problem. The issue would embrace not only Kosovo, but Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and so on.

I mention these issues only to show how incredibly interconnected ethnicity, politics and geography are in the southern Balkans. When I was there I visited nine classrooms. I visited bars, hospitals and restaurants. I talked to the people. Only then did I understand just how complex this problem really is.

• (2155 )

I have raised all of these questions for two purposes. First, I want the Canadian people to know what I believe the Kosovo crisis really involves. There is the humanitarian dimension of trying to end the ethnic cleansing in that province, something we are all disgusted with, and of seeking a solution to the long simmering ethnic problems in the region. However, the stakes of our involvement are far broader. It is also about the very purpose of NATO itself in the post-cold war period.

Second, I raised these questions to indicate how this government and in particular this foreign affairs minister have let Canadians down. I suspect that we do not have a votable motion before us today because the government does not want to confront many of these issues. It wants a blank cheque to cover its own failings. The government does not wish to talk about these issues because it knows that Canada no longer has as much influence in the world as it once had. Soft power has alienated us from our NATO allies who no longer think of us as serious international actors.

Thirty years of disregard and disdain for the armed forces has left us without a credible voice at NATO military headquarters. I have learned these facts by talking to Canadians, academics and many foreign officials.

It is true that we still sit on the North Atlantic Council since all members do, but our words just do not carry the weight they once did. Our opinions are no longer as respected as they once were. The legacy of effective Canadian diplomacy which led to NATO's creation has been squandered by governments in the last 50 years. We are now marginalized. We are not part of the contact group and there is a reason for that. Soft power has brought us that.

It is often remarked that crisis focuses the mind. I hope that the ongoing crisis over Kosovo has that effect on all members and all parties in this House. The stakes involved are very great, be they the lives of Canadian forces personnel or the vital interests of this country. It is for this House to calmly and deliberately contemplate

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the consequences of the actions now being discussed. We must remember that each one of us as members of parliament might have to stand in front of parents or grandparents who will ask "What did my son or daughter die for in the mud in Kosovo?"

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member is twofold. At the end of his speech he asked the terrible question of how we will explain our fellow citizens being put in harm's way by being engaged in the present air operation or in some future operation. I thought that his leader gave the answer to that question very clearly in the House this afternoon in his speech. We are there because of a moral imperative to be there. I thought his leader put that very well. Is the member distancing himself from his leader on the issue?

A second question comes to mind. I know the member is committed to NATO, but he is very knowledgeable about foreign affairs. He knows full well that NATO's mandate does not run to Chechnya, Africa or Indonesia. Does he not fear that by raising these sorts of fears in the minds of the Canadian public that he is doing exactly what he says nobody should be doing, which is putting in doubt the credibility of NATO, which as he knows is committed to an operation in Europe and Europe alone? Far-fetched examples from around the globe will only distract people from a true understanding of what we are trying to achieve in this debate.

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, I am a supporter of NATO. However, I believe that when NATO's mandate has gone beyond the security mandate of defence, it is only right to ask these questions. The parliaments of Britain and Australia, and the U.S. congress and senate are openly debating this issue about sending men and women into harm's way.

• (2200 )

It seems like the Prime Minister says we are un-Canadian if we dare challenge anything the Liberal government does. Fortunately I am in a party where I can say I think we need to have answers before we commit our troops. Other members would say that we should commit them, that we have all the answers we need.

However we should raise those questions. When I have to face parents or grandparents I want to be able to say I asked all of the questions before I gave a blank cheque.

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment and then ask a brief question of the member for Red Deer who gave an excellent speech on the history of the whole Balkan area and the nature of the many hundreds of years of conflict and hatred which have existed in that area and have flourished for some strange reason.

This whole undertaking could have probably been best done under the United Nations, but we must look at the United Nations and the ineffective way it conducts its mandate to try to keep peace in the world.

Like the hon. member I asked many of the same questions during discussions in our caucus. I too am very concerned about Canadian soldiers and Canadian personnel being involved in a conflict where there may be no apparent solution, or if there is one it will not last for very long.

I ask all those questions and I come up with the answers. I have to say to the hon. member that I would not want to have lived during 1939 to 1945 when the world sat on its hands for a long period of time and watched what happened with the Nazis, Hitler and the Holocaust.

I have come to the conclusion that even with the ineffectiveness of the UN somebody had to step in. NATO seems to be the only body willing and able to do it. Did the hon. member not come to the same conclusion? When nobody else will step in to keep the peace in the world, does NATO not have the obligation to do it?

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with a lot of those things. I am extremely upset that the UN has declined to the point it is at today where it is ineffective and unable because of bureaucracy, because of the veto and so on to deal with any world issues. We could go back to Rwanda and so on where it failed to react.

I did come to the conclusion that air strikes were a way to drive Mr. Milosevic to the table. I still hold that feeling. I am glad that NATO got involved. We supported that and continue to support that.

However there may well be another step. That is the step that should be openly debated. All of the facts should be put forward. There should then be an opportunity for members to vote on whether or not to do that. Then they will be able to accomplish that face to face I described at the end of my speech.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if the hon. member who just spoke could inform the House and, consequently, the public, as there seems to be a communication problem.

People who are watching us at home have a right to be informed. They heard about the possibility of a world conflict. Could the hon. member inform the House, because he told us he was opposed to sending in ground troops? Could he tell us if the 18 days of air strikes have shaken Kosovo enough to make it possible to negotiate and avoid having to send in ground troops?

Having sent planes in for 18, 19 or 20 days, we look a bit ridiculous. It is vital that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, or NATO inform the public, at least

the Canadian public, so that we know what we are up against. What will become of the refugees?

In the course of numerous conflicts, Canada's role has been primarily that of a peacekeeper.

• (2205)

Canada's role in the war in Kosovo is a far cry from putting up tents and distributing bread to the hungry. The F-18s have been brought out and now there is talk of even more advanced weaponry. I would like the member to inform the House and therefore the public, which is undoubtedly listening to this debate in the hope of being better informed.

Does the member think that Kosovo has been sufficiently rattled by the 18 to 20 days of combat to bring President Milosevic back to the negotiating table in the very near future, or is a ground war inevitable?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, this brings up a very important point. I think the member asked three things. I believe people are not well informed about the Balkans. I must admit it has taken me six years of concentrated effort and a lot of talking with ambassadors from the various areas and the people involved, including the Russian ambassador, to understand the complexity of the issue.

We owe the Canadian public this information. That is why the House should be full with 301 members and why we should have a debate. A take note debate should be an information session. Then people intelligently know the views rather than get them through the filter of the media.

Do I think the 18 days of bombing have had an effect? I believe it is starting to. Tomorrow the G-8 is conducting negotiations. The G-8, with Russia as a member, is involved. The OSCE with 55 countries is also in full negotiation. Russia is a member of that. I believe getting Russia into that international peace force will allow both sides to step back and let negotiation work. The combination of bombing and that can probably stop this thing. That is how I see it happening.

Do I know that it will work? Obviously not, but at least there is a plan that I can understand. The meetings of the G-8 tomorrow in Bonn are extremely important. They might put on additional pressure. It will not be a NATO mission any more, which would make me happy. It will then become a much broader base. It further points out how the UN is not able to handle this sort of thing.

The hon. member also asked about refugees. Obviously Canada has a role in that regard as well. For a long time we have accepted true refugees. At this point the main thing we should do in this crisis situation is make sure they are well taken care of where they

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are, as best we can deliver. There are now 80 flights a day into Macedonia and 60 flights a day into Albania carrying relief effort. That has solved the problem literally in the very short term.

I believe we are taking care of that. NATO is doing a great job in that area. Ultimately let us find out who wants to go back and who wants to become a refugee. Then we will solve that problem in due course.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Laval West.

I listened with great interest to the debate so far and I do not wish to repeat that which many hon. members have said in the House. It is clear from what I have listened to in the debate that most of our colleagues are in favour of the government's action and of NATO's action as it presently takes place. Some have even made it clear that they would support further action, including ground troops under certain circumstances if our humanitarian aim to return the people of Kosovo to their homes is not met.

All hon. members of the House recognize that our action raises difficult issues. The hon. member for Red Deer just referred to some of them. The hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt also referred to some of them.

The issue of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia in traditional international law terms and in traditional diplomatic terms is a very serious issue that we must consider. The future of the United Nations system given NATO's role without specific UN security council sanction raises issues in itself which require serious consideration in the House.

• (2210)

Finally, among many other issues is the suffering of many innocent people in Yugoslavia. We must recognize that in seeking to stop the government of Mr. Milosevic and his war making machine others are paying the price.

All of us have many constituents with families asking us to bring an end to the situation. Those same constituents also recognize that ultimately the solution to this issue, the solution to the problem in the Balkans, will be the restoration of democracy in Yugoslavia, the restoration of an open, tolerant and pluralistic society in that area. That is how we got where we are by virtue of the existence of a dictatorship which did not stumble into the issue.

The member for Red Deer raised issues of the complexities of life in the Balkans. Members will recall that Bismarck said in 1888 "If another war occurs in Europe it will be because of some silly thing in the Balkans". We are still wrestling with the complexities of the ending of the Turkish empire, the whole issue of the complexities of relationships of peoples in the Balkans. When we

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look at this issue we know that it was planned by one mastermind. It was planned by the government of Mr. Milosevic.

Recent evidence is showing that military leaders who were opposed to him were dismissed, that troops were put in with the specific issue of conducting ethnic cleansing, and that this would have gone on if we had done nothing and sat there. We were therefore forced to face this awful choice.

Would we sit there and do nothing as the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry said in the debate earlier this afternoon, or, as another member just said, what about the analogy of 1939? Would we sit there and do nothing, let it happen and run the certainty that there would have been over a million refugees in Macedonia and in other countries in the region, threatening the security of Europe for the next how many years?

How long would these million or million and a half people live in squalor and in refugee camps? Have we not seen the refugee camps in Palestine? Have we not seen refugee camps in other places where whole generations of people have grown up as refugees outside their countries? Could we in all honesty tolerate that situation to happen again if we had an opportunity to deal with it?

As the member for Red Deer's leader said this afternoon, did we not have a moral imperative to deal with it? Did we not have a right or a duty to say yes, this creates a difficult precedent? Yes, it raises difficult issues of sovereignty. Do we not have an obligation to ask ourselves whether we are living in a changed world, a world in which we have learned the lessons of failure to intervene in grave cases such as Rwanda or even the second world war?

Are we not living in a new world where humanitarian rules and humanitarian considerations prevail, rules that are being evolved by the international criminal court, by the Pinochet case and by other precedents which are telling us that national sovereignty is not what it used to be, that leaders can no longer in their own countries treat their population the way they wish and be able to get away with it because of a 19th century doctrine of national sovereignty?

We must deal with this because we are obliged to. Our peace and security are threatened when we see such situations developing with the terrible humanitarian consequences of millions of displaced people being pushed out of a country because of the iron will of one government and one man.

That is why the Prime Minister and the leaders of all other parties were of the view today that we must continue with this until there is a solution. That solution is that the Kosovars must go home. That is the moral imperative of which the leader of the Reform Party spoke this afternoon. That is the answer to the objections that the member for Red Deer has raised in the House this evening.

• (2215 )

When members have said use ground troops if necessary that is what they are trying to deal with, recognizing that if that comes there would be an important role for a possible Russian contingent in such a force. This would be difficult but Russia's present prime minister, Mr. Primakov, is a very able and skilful diplomat. He may yet be able to bring some helpful resolution to this horrible problem.

I want to raise two other issues which I do not think have been considered in any great detail in the House today.

The first is that of Montenegro. We owe it to ourselves and to the people of Montenegro and their courageous president, Milo Djukanovic who has managed to keep his people out of this conflict, to ensure that we and our NATO allies do nothing that would push his people into a war situation. He has so skilfully and ably resisted the terrible pulls in that region and has saved his people from the scourge of this conflict. I hope that our NATO allies and our government are doing everything to ensure that peace will reign in that one small area of sanity that still prevails in that region.

Second, I hope that we will turn our minds to the issue of what will happen after. The leader of the New Democratic Party raised this in the House this afternoon. I support her position.

We have to be in a position to consider rebuilding the society after this is over. To intervene today and leave a totally destroyed society would be irresponsible. We cannot do that. We are now engaged, it seems to me, in a situation to ensure that Kosovars return to their homes, but they must return to homes. We will have to make sure that when this is over we will be engaged in a process to enable them to return to a real society that we help build together.

We also must make sure in Serbia itself, in Belgrade that the citizens know that when Mr. Milosevic goes, and he will eventually go at some time, and a new, open and liberal society is developed in that country, we will be there to help rebuild. Otherwise all we have done up to now will have been a total waste of time.

I ask members of the House that when we are calling for action today, let us not forget the humanitarian aid we are looking at. Humanitarian aid will have to extend well beyond that of helping refugees in their place. Humanitarian aid will have to go in the long term to rebuilding a society, to rebuilding democratic institutions and an infrastructure that will enable reasonable life to return to that area. Only if we look at this long view, only if we deal not only with the present crisis, but recognize the root causes of it, will we be able to avoid the problems that have led us here.

Only if we follow the road of recognizing that there is a new society with a new rule of law applicable to the Pinochets, the Rwandans, the Milosevics and others will we be able to assure

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ourselves that this will not reoccur and we will not be debating this issue at another time in the House in other circumstances.

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member on his presentation. It was a very good one and very well thought out as well.

I want to make a comment and ask him a question. It is regrettable that we did not get the chance to debate this matter before our air force was committed to military action. The bottom line now is that we are embroiled in a military conflict overseas. I am sure he is aware that many military experts feel that this will inevitably lead to the involvement of ground troops. Polling seems to indicate that a majority of the Canadian public currently support the government's position on this particular issue.

I wonder if the hon. member would comment on whether in his opinion that government support will hold if we get into an all out war in the hills and mountains of Kosovo, a war that would inevitably lead to casualties on both sides.

• (2220)

**Mr. Bill Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is a premise in the question which I would urge the hon. member to reconsider in saying that this matter was not debated before we engaged in the aerial operation we are presently in. The member will recall that we had a debate in the House in February around the issue of the Rambouillet accords.

As I recall, at that time it was understood in the debate that if the Rambouillet accords were not adhered to, Mr. Milosevic would have to recognize that air action would be taken. My recollection was that we and the members of the House believed that was necessary to bring Mr. Milosevic to that position.

It did not succeed and the member then asks and very rightly so, what happens next if we go to ground forces? That decision can only be taken with an extreme degree of caution. I think the Prime Minister has been very cautious on this issue. He has made it very clear that this is even in his view not the time to discuss it.

If we are to discuss it, then let us make it clear it would only be done in circumstances where we would be assured that militarily the operation would be with the best possible assurance that the casualties would be minimal. We cannot ever go into a ground action and say there will be no casualties. That would be irresponsible. But we can certainly make sure that it is planned and directed in a way in which those would be an absolute minimum. That would require a great deal of planning, a great many ground forces and a lot of commitment before we got there.

I would not by any means suggest to the member that I as a responsible member of parliament would take that obligation or that idea lightly. It would be an extremely complicated and very difficult step. Given the humanitarian considerations we are looking at, we may well end up there rather than face the alternative which would be to say to Mr. Milosevic "You achieved what you want. You have a totally bombed out and destroyed society, but you have got it, you have got your piece of earth and others will not live there".

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I often agree with the general premise the chairman of our foreign affairs committee puts forward and certainly the last one regarding the rebuilding that will be necessary.

I also agree with him that if we rebuild the infrastructure and we build the economic well-being of the people in Serbia and Kosovo that we probably can create a peaceful situation. The problem with that whole thing is it is like Haiti and other areas which we have discussed. We know if we have a 30 to 50 year plan of rebuilding and reconstruction from the grassroots up, including the education system, the hospitals and all that goes with that, that we probably could accomplish it.

The problem is dollars and the commitment of any government anywhere in the world to 30 to 50 years of rebuilding. Does the member really believe we can assure the people of Serbia, as he mentioned, or the people of Kosovo, that we will be that committed?

**Mr. Bill Graham:** Mr. Speaker, that is certainly a very fair question. It is a question of dollars and I do not disagree with the member, but we also have to ask ourselves, are the dollars more? At the moment every Cruise missile costs \$1 million or whatever the amount is. There is the possible loss of life on going in to solve this. If we are going to allow this to happen again, if we do sort this out, is it going to be a longer term pain for a short term gain, instead of the reverse? We really have to look at it.

I think the member will agree with me because he and I have travelled together to Bosnia and we have looked at this situation. The NATO or SFOR protectorate to call it that which exists in Bosnia is a long term operation. He would agree with that. It requires a significant commitment to re-education, to long term understanding of democracy building and otherwise. I think he would agree with me that there are bright spots in there. There is a reason for encouragement. There is a belief of a lot of people in the world today that the old-fashioned way of settling things through wars is not going to take us anywhere successfully. We have to work toward that.

I agree with the member entirely that this would not be cheap, but the war we are otherwise going to engage in to solve it would be more expensive.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the motion regarding the human tragedy which has been happening in Kosovo.

The situation in Kosovo and surrounding countries is desperate. This is a humanitarian crisis involving hundreds of thousands of people forced to flee their homes. Once they get to the border, they are stripped of their passports, their dignity, their heritage.

This is one of the worst forced exodus of civilians in Europe since the end of the second world war.

• (2225)

According to unconfirmed reports, there are up to 800,000 displaced Kosovars, 150,000 to 200,000 of whom are said to be without shelter. A large number of them are being harassed by Serb authorities, and are in a dreadful state, suffering from shock, malnutrition and hypothermia. We had to act, we could not stand idle before such a disaster.

I am very proud that our government has consistently co-operated with the international community to put an end to this conflict by promoting a fair political settlement allowing refugees to go back to Kosovo without fearing for their security.

During a crisis such as this it is important for people not to lose track of underlying causes. Therefore I would like to recall how the crisis started and how Canada responded to the events.

*[English]*

We should bear in mind that before Mr. Milosevic rose to power, Kosovo was made up principally of ethnic Albanians and had constitutional autonomy. That right was stripped away by Mr. Milosevic in 1989. From that point forward he has deliberately implemented a plan to impoverish and oppress the Kosovars. Early last year his security forces mounted a campaign against innocent civilians similar to the ethnic atrocities we witnessed in both Croatia and Bosnia.

*[Translation]*

Canada supported the systematic efforts by our allies to settle the situation diplomatically. Last year, two UN resolutions failed to achieve an end to the fighting in Kosovo. Canada would by far have preferred a diplomatic solution—we have said so and we have repeated it—as we have indicated to Mr. Milosevic, who preferred to ignore the honest warnings given.

An agreement was reached, finally, under threat of NATO's air power. It established a ceasefire and provided for the intervention of an observation mission headed by the Organization on Security and Co-operation in Europe that would ensure the provisions were followed.

In addition, the agreement provided for the imposition of strict limitations on the deployment of Yugoslav security forces, but Mr. Milosevic unfortunately did not keep his word. The Yugoslav forces violated the ceasefire and conducted a campaign against civilians that clearly contravened international human rights.

The Yugoslavs increasingly defied the allies over the next four months, as the increased violence and specific incidents, such as the massacre at Racak, testified. Despite all, we continued all our diplomatic efforts, such as the discussions held in Rambouillet, France.

In these negotiations, we tried to find a diplomatic solution that would balance the interests and demands of the two parties. The provisional agreement reached provided, among other things, for greater autonomy for Kosovo within the federal republic of Yugoslavia. It did not affect in any way the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. The agreement demanded of both parties the courage to make compromises.

*[English]*

In the end the Kosovars showed the courage to sign the agreement. However, Mr. Milosevic was only interested in gaining precious time. The diplomatic track has run its course. Our vision and our commitment to leave no diplomatic stone unturned were once again rewarded by Mr. Milosevic's unwillingness to stand by the agreements he had made or to seek a peaceful solution. In fact, he continued the build up of his forces during the Rambouillet process.

Let us be clear about one thing. We have no quarrel with the people of Yugoslavia. It is Mr. Milosevic and his government which bear responsibility for this human tragedy. Now we have been forced to turn to a measure of last resort, military force. This was not an easy decision nor a hasty one. But the interests we seek to preserve and protect in this region are significant.

Peace and stability in Europe has always been a pillar of Canadian security policy. Our interest in restoring and maintaining that stability is as great today as it was in the past.

• (2230)

*[Translation]*

The goal of NATO's air strikes is obvious: reduce the capacity of Yugoslavia's forces to attack the people of Kosovo. Kosovars themselves admit that it is not these military operations that caused the present tragedy.

The operations seek to prevent an even worse humanitarian disaster and to prevent the instability to spread elsewhere in the region. We are using both diplomatic and military means to reach our goals. The first phase of air strikes was aimed at reducing the capacity of the very powerful air defence system of Yugoslavia



and, hence, to reduce its threat to NATO's pilots. The day following the raids, Yugoslavia broke off its diplomatic relations with the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France.

In response to the intensification of Yugoslavia's offensive in Kosovo, NATO decided to launch the second phase of operations, namely to attack the armed forces of Yugoslavia and reduce their capacity to harm Kosovars.

Because of the intransigence of Mr. Milosevic, waves of refugees crossed the border into neighbouring countries. On April 3, some 320,000 Albanian Kosovars had already fled Kosovo or were gathering at the border in the hope of seeking refuge in Albania, in the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia and in Montenegro, whose governments are more tolerant than the Serbian government, and elsewhere. Refugees represent an enormous challenge for those countries, which are very poor and can hardly meet their own basic needs.

Since the beginning of April, NATO attacks have intensified, though the goal of operations remains the same, to reduce and eventually destroy the resources used by Mr. Milosevic to wage war against citizens of his own country.

Canada has contributed effectively and with determination to these military operations. Our CF-18s, with their state of the art equipment, and NATO's AWAC aircraft, that are operated in part by Canadian crews, control the air space and guarantee the effectiveness of strikes, with the essential help of support personnel.

We should not forget that, at the same time, the Canadian government is doing its share to help the affected population and has provided to date over \$18 million in humanitarian help. Right here in Canada, when the government has announced on April 5 that it would receive 5,000 refugees, Canadians opened their hearts and started preparing their homes to welcome the Kosovars.

Activities in Canada to support a lasting peace in that part of the world have included permanent support for the international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia. We want to make it clear that Yugoslav leaders will be held responsible for all the crimes they have committed or allowed to be committed in Kosovo. We will not let Mr. Milosevic's government and armed security forces to continue their action in Kosovo.

As a loyal and effective member of NATO, Canada is striving, along with its allies, to find a solution to this conflict and to promote a fair political settlement that will allow refugees to go back in their country in safety.

I think Canada should persevere in its efforts, and I know that Canadians share my position.

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[English]

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech tonight with great interest.

One of the things that many people are concerned about in Canada and indeed around the world with respect to this present conflict is its possible escalation.

I was very pleased earlier today to hear the Prime Minister say that he was not adverse to a truly international peacekeeping force rather than simply a NATO force, which was one of the conditions of the Rambouillet accord. Of course, by the very nature of the fact that the NATO force is now viewed by the Serbians as being the aggressor, I think increasingly that condition is unacceptable to Serbia; not just to Milosevic, to whom it may or may not be of concern, but it is certainly unacceptable to the Serbian people.

• (2235 )

I wonder as a member of the government if the hon. member could comment on what her view is with regards to Russia playing a greater role in a potential international peacekeeping force and why we continue to hear that Canada is not making any concerted effort to approach the Russians, to make any overtures toward them to try to have them involved in a much more substantive manner, in much the way that they were involved in brokering the Rambouillet accord. If we are going to have a negotiated settlement at some point in time, I think it is incredibly important that the Russians be involved.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question. It brings up a point that I would have liked to have addressed in my earlier remarks.

Historically Russia has been an ally of the Serb population for several centuries. I would certainly hope that Russia would step in. Russia has certainly tried to help by talking to Mr. Milosevic, but from what I understand things are at a standstill.

I agree with the hon. member that it would be extremely useful for the Canadian government to stretch out a hand in dialogue. I will put it in those terms. Both Canada and Russia should sit down with other nations concerned, possibly the United States, to see what could be done.

In terms of NATO, our efforts so far have been to try to weaken the Serbian military force.

I disagree with the member that Milosevic is not an important person. He is key to what is going on in that part of the world.

I think it is important for Canada to move forward in a proactive way and to reach out to Russia.

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**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the role of the House of Commons and parliament in this debate. It seems that speaker after speaker from the government benches has defended the idea that the House of Commons should not be involved in this decision except to have a general discussion, but not to actually have a vote.

Sometimes in this place we vote on the most absurd and silly things. However, we cannot seem to get the government to commit to a vote if we are going to have a declaration of war. It is my belief that that should never happen.

I am in full agreement with the comments made by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister in 1990-91 regarding the Iraq war. At that time they said that we should not go to war, and we should not commit troops, unless we hold a vote in the House of Commons.

I would even go so far as to say that in the Constitution of Canada there should be a provision that we cannot commit troops to a military engagement, attacking another country, unless it comes to the House of Commons first. No cabinet, no 30 or 40 individuals in this country, should have that kind of power.

How can this government member not agree with me when I say that there must be full and complete disclosure, that there must be full and complete discussion in this House on the costs, the refugee problems, how many troops are going to be committed and the danger as this conflict escalates to a ground war? How can anyone in this House not say that we should have a vote before we commit any further to this conflict in Yugoslavia?

[Translation]

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member answered his own question when he said, and quote:

[English]

We should have a vote before we commit to sending ground troops into Kosovo and Serbian territory. I could not be more in agreement with that. The Prime Minister repeated time and time again today during question period that at this time there is no question of our committing any Canadian ground troops and that if there ever was any question there would be a debate in this House and a vote.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in tonight's debate, but also a bit weary at having to do so, because it is always hard to address humanitarian crises that are not under control and that can lead God knows where.

• (2240)

For the benefit of our fellow citizens who might not have had the opportunity to follow the daily coverage of this crisis in the papers, I think it would be useful to give an overview of the situation.

On March 11, before NATO started its air campaign, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, estimated that more than 400,000 people had been forced to flee their homes since the beginning of the conflict in March 1998. Among them, 230,000 were displaced within Kosovo itself.

On March 24, the very day the air campaign started, Kosovar refugees totalled 450,000 people, including 260,000 inside Kosovo. In only 13 days, the number of displaced persons has increased by 30,000.

The last solution proposed by the Assembly was the international peace conference in Rambouillet, France. This conference ended in a peace plan which the Kosovars never signed. In a word, this peace plan extending over three years provided for a substantial level of autonomy for the Kosovars, but always within Yugoslavia.

Moreover, it provided for the deployment of NATO troops to ensure the enforcement of that plan. It is this last element that President Milosevic rejected, foreseeing the partition of Kosovo from Serbia at the end of the three years, and occupation of his territory by a foreign force.

It is therefore to put an end to the violence of the Serbian authorities against the Albanian population of Kosovo, which represents 80% of the total population, and to try and convince Milosevic to accept the Rambouillet accord, that NATO conducted air strikes against the Yugoslavian army.

It is essentially for the same reasons that Canada agreed to participate to the NATO'S Allied Forces operation. Canada also recognized that as long as this conflict was permitted to last, it could result in major humanitarian disasters and destabilise the whole region at the same time. This is why Belgrade's acceptance of the Rambouillet peace plan had become essential from a Canadian standpoint.

The Bloc Québécois supported the NATO military intervention in Kosovo and Yugoslavia because it felt and indeed, like all the NATO countries, still thinks that it is better to try to do something in Kosovo than to let a situation that has been going on for 10 years continue to deteriorate.

But time is a very significant and legitimate time factor with respect to the air strikes in Yugoslavia. I questioned the Minister of National Defence about it in this House, but he did not answer. My first question was about the air strikes. I asked him how long they would go on—weeks, months perhaps—before any result can be

achieved. Do NATO countries all agree to keep bombing Yugoslavia much longer before considering other options?

Mr. Speaker, members are presently having a private conversation near me and that bothers me. Would you please ask them to tone it down a little or to take their conversation somewhere else.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I would ask hon. members to please be a little more quiet.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Laurin:** As I was saying, while NATO pursues its air strikes, the exodus is continuing. The massacres are continuing and the ethnic cleansing started a long time ago is intensifying. If our goal is to stop the dreaded genocide, the crimes against humanity and the exodus, we must ask ourselves if all of this will not be a fait accompli in a few weeks. We will then ask ourselves: What is the use of going on?

• (2245)

If, for the time being, Russia's opposition remains mainly rhetorical, who is to say that, in a few weeks, this opposition will not take a more active form, such as the sending of military equipment or countering NATO action?

If NATO members are really committed to solve the problem in Kosovo and to make sure refugees return to their homes, they must set a deadline which, if crossed, will entail other military or political action, including ground troops.

While his military storage sites are being bombarded, an armed Milosevic is going around getting rid of refugees, doing what he wants, acting freely on his territory, and we are attacking buildings and storage sites. If this were to go on for too long, it is very likely that Milosevic would have the time to do what he intends to do, and even though his weapon storage sites have been destroyed, he would have achieved his goal.

Lets us look at what has been gained from a few weeks of bombing. In Albania, for example, more than 500,000 refugees are crammed in camps, schools, factories, hospitals and Albanian foster families. Living conditions as reported by international agencies are described as "not too bad". However, Albania will not be able to cope for very long without substantial assistance from the international community.

In Macedonia, more than 115,000 refugees are crowded into camps surrounded by barbed wire and controlled by the Macedonian authorities. Conditions are very difficult, and the Macedonian authorities have warned the international community on several occasions that they could not take in any more. Most of the refugees are women and children.

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There are 25,000 refugees in Bosnia as well. There are 60,000 in Montenegro and 6,000 in Turkey. Over 100,000 middle aged and young men have disappeared. In Kosovo itself, over 500,000 persons have been displaced. They are either in hiding, on the roads or have sought refuge in the country.

So, for the moment, some 800,000 Kosovars are still in their homes, that is, less than the original population of this country, which was some 1,800,000.

Macedonia's parliament issued an appeal for help to the international community. Initially, the Macedonian parliamentarians asked for financial and material help and support for the NGOs in order to take charge of the refugees. Macedonia has already spent \$200 million as a direct result of the atrocities committed in Kosovo, of an annual gross domestic product of \$3 billion. That is fairly close to 10%.

The parliament also asked NATO members to take in refugees in order to give their countries relief, and this explains the hasty agreement by NATO countries to take in refugees.

Some 30% of the Macedonian population were Albanian speakers, and the authorities feared the ethnic balance would be upset by the influx of refugees. This explains in part their behaviour toward the refugees, the evacuations and border closures. They must be given all possible assistance.

The assembly of the people of the republic of Albania also spoke out in total support of the NATO air strikes and called for ground troops to be sent urgently.

• (2250)

Moreover, Albanian parliamentarians thank the international community for its help and ask that such help be increased to meet the growing needs of refugees and the population in northern Albania.

The time has come to consider our options, whether military, political, humanitarian, diplomatic or other. On behalf of my party, I will propose a number of possible solutions, which we feel this House should contemplate.

At the military level, even though we have not reached that stage yet, we think that ground military action should be considered, or at least discussed. We should look at the benefits and drawbacks of such action. The time has come to think about solutions other than the one being applied right now, that is air strikes.

Since the beginning of the NATO air strikes, President Milosevic has accelerated the pace of the forced exodus of Albanian Kosovars. The police, the militia and the Serb army have continued and even intensified their action against the Kosovars. The net result of this is that with 500,000 refugees—or 621,000 since March 1998 according to the UNHCR—the objectives pursued with the air strikes have not produced the anticipated results, namely to stop the

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atrocities committed against the people of Kosovo, and nor have they led Milosevic to accept the Rambouillet peace plan.

In that context, the Bloc Québécois feels that the use of allied ground troops must be considered to stop the atrocities and the repression of which Kosovars are victims, this in light of Milosevic's firm resolve not to make any concession about Kosovo, which is the cradle of the Serb nation.

This intervention to impose peace should be organized, or at least considered as quickly as possible. In fact, the border closings, the mines laid at the borders, and the numerous atrocities against the Kosovars reveal the intentions of Milosevic and his security forces to commit genocide against the Kosovo people.

NATO's military intervention on the ground could allow all Kosovar refugees to go back home, not just some of them. NATO must, therefore, liberate all of Kosovo. This option is the one more closely matching the reason why Canada and NATO are fighting: to implement a peace plan, the Rambouillet peace plan, and to stop the atrocities against the Kosovo people.

At the political level, solutions are also possible, including UN involvement and the application of international law. On April 9, Kofi Annan called for a conditional cease-fire and for Yugoslavian compliance with the numerous UN resolutions. It is vital for the UN, its security council in particular, to be involved in this crisis.

Canada has a duty to try, by every means possible, to submit to the council a draft peace agreement reflecting the main thrust of Rambouillet.

On January 19, 1999, the security council denounced Yugoslavia's refusal to allow the international tribunal prosecutor to investigate the Racak massacre. This request for an inquiry was a follow-up to resolutions 1160, 1199 and 1203, all issued in 1998.

Canada must submit a new request, asking that the security council issue a resolution condemning the actions of the Yugoslav government. Canada must bring before the UN the charges of genocide and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the government of Yugoslavia, in accordance with the 1948 convention against genocide.

• (2255)

Finally, there should be a free and democratic consultation of Kosovars regarding the future status of Kosovo.

From a humanitarian point of view, consideration should be given to ongoing and unconditional aid. The decisions we make today will have an impact on the decisions our children will have to make in 20, 25 or 30 years. Canada cannot slough off 25 or 30 years from now responsibilities it takes on today. Canada is at war against the Serbs and Canada will have to help the people it has fought, the people who have suffered in this war.

Canada will have to help them, and it must think about helping them not just while the bombing is taking place, but also in the years, and there will be many, of rebuilding ahead.

There is a strong risk that the rush of refugees to the Republic of Macedonia and to Albania will destabilize these regimes. Massive, unconditional and direct assistance is therefore necessary if the conflict is not to spread throughout the region.

The appeals from these two countries must be taken seriously and Canada has a responsibility to respond. Beyond these geopolitical contingencies, all western countries have an obligation to provide all conceivable aid to the populations displaced by these conflict.

This aid requires, and will continue to require, significant assistance over a long period. Canada must prepare for this and show its support for non-government organizations such as UNHCR, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent immediately.

Airlifting refugees to Canada has already been considered and careful preparations for this must continue. Canada is willing to receive those displaced persons wishing to come here. However, the government must quickly clarify their status.

Diplomatically, it is vital that thought be given to the chaos that has prevailed in the Balkans since 1989. This situation has brought nothing but grief to the nations in the region, and has also caused many problems for the international community. Human tragedies, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and now the genocidal intent of the Milosevic regime are unacceptable events for humanity.

The human as well as financial and political costs of such chaos are extremely high. Once the present armed conflict comes to an end, the situation in the Balkans will not be stabilized. Tensions will remain very high. Yugoslavian, Kosovar, Albanian and Macedonian infrastructures will be either destroyed or non-existent. The financial and political situation in Kosovo, and also in Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia will remain disastrous.

This is the reason why the Bloc Québécois is suggesting that a plan for the whole region be developed right away, a plan similar to the Marshall plan, which was responsible for the reconstruction and ultimately the unification of Europe after the second world war; such a plan would involve massive financial and material assistance to the tune of US\$50 billion over several years; this assistance would be dependent on the respect of certain economic and political rules as well as the implementation of a future peace plan.

This massive help, which at first glance appears very significant, would be nothing compared to the cost of a war-torn region in the heart of Europe, a region which, instead of being part of the international community, would only bring chaos and desolation.

Such a plan which would come under the authority of the European Union, but Canada and the United States should be involved; it would allow the region to move beyond war and its immediate consequences towards reconstruction and democracy instead of tensions and desolation.

• (2300)

[English]

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the debate tonight precludes a discussion on options which were open to us one month ago, including whether to go to war with NATO, whether all avenues at the United Nations had been exhausted and whether the lessons learned in Bosnia are applicable to Kosovo.

Tonight the debate takes place under different circumstances. We have concluded that the United Nations Security Council is impotent. We have seen images of genocide, of columns of refugees, of burning villages and of murdered civilians. We are participants in NATO's bombing actions.

Therefore today the questions facing us are different from a month ago. They are: Why are we there? What are we to achieve? How can we achieve our goals?

We are there because we can no longer watch such atrocities take place, because diplomatic negotiations have been exhausted, because we are members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe which is responsible for security in Europe, and because there is no similar organization in existence in other parts of the world.

We are there to achieve security and peace for the people of Kosovo, to prevent another Bosnia and to bring stability to a troubled region of Europe. We are there to prevent actions of brutality such as those committed by Karadzic and General Mladic in Bosnia.

We are there because a new principle has emerged. The principle says that in the face of genocide there is a humanitarian role for the world community to play that is more important than the principle of sovereignty. It is a paradox that this humanitarian role should take the form of military action, all other avenues having been exhausted. It would have been preferable not to have taken military action, but facing the options available Canada chose the lesser of two evils, military action over allowing the genocide to continue.

What do we wish to achieve through military action? The safe return to their homes of all deportees and displaced persons. The protection and care for those displaced inside Kosovo. The expulsion from Kosovo of Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces through a peacekeeping force, as was the case and is the case in Bosnia, Cyprus and other troubled spots in the world. The apprehension of indicted war criminals is amongst our goals, as

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well as the defence of Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro in the event of a Serbian attack. Finally, we wish to achieve the improvement of communications from Europe into Kosovo and Serbia in order to inform the population of the reasons and motives for our actions.

Looking beyond the immediate goals there is a role for Canada to play with like-minded nations in search of a mechanism that will provide rules for international intervention in domestic conflict. Canada has experts in preventive diplomacy. Canada has a reputation as a peacebuilder and peacekeeper. Surely we can build a new order to deal with domestic conflict.

We can start with the UN convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. Article 8 of that convention is quite explicit. It states "Any contracting party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations—as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide".

It is worth noting that 50 years after the general assembly agreed to the text of the genocide convention the United Nations Security Council established the international tribunal for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia. The prosecutor, Louise Arbour, is playing a strong leadership role. The tribunal is making good progress and increasingly commands respect.

Those who disagree with Canada's military actions say that Canada is in violation of international law. In reply it must be noted that Yugoslavia, having engaged in acts of genocide, has violated the UN genocide convention.

• (2305)

The time has come to put teeth into that convention, to reinforce the role of the international tribunal in The Hague and to lay the foundations for building adequate international preventive action for the future.

As we saw today in question period, it is only natural that this debate should centre around the question of whether to send troops into Kosovo. Several speakers have raised that question. The answer seems fairly clear if we ask ourselves how returning civilians and the remaining population can be assured the necessary protection and how the removal of the Serbian police and armed forces can be achieved. Having taken the drastic step of intervening with air forces it becomes inevitable and necessary, for the same reasons we decided to risk the lives of Canadian pilots, to send in troops as well. Sending in troops so as to intervene on the ground will become inevitable almost as a law of military gravity.

In 1939 it could be said that western democracies declared war when driven by exasperation, having exhausted all other means. It seems that in 1999 western democracies have become involved in the Balkans having exhausted all other means as well. Had this debate taken place one month ago I would have strongly advised

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against military intervention and for a greater effort through the general assembly of the United Nations. Today, with the decision of a military intervention having been made, while I find it repugnant to see Canada involved in the act of bombing, it would be even more repugnant at this point in time for Canada to abstain from participating in a severe action aimed at extirpating genocide and racial and ethnic persecution.

I believe that we have drawn the correct lessons from what happened in Bosnia just a few years ago. Hopefully we will succeed in stopping the ugly forces of nationalism in Yugoslavia. Hopefully, when peace is restored, the security of people living in this troubled region of Europe will be assured regardless of ethnic origin, regardless of whether they are a majority or a minority, regardless of whether they are Christian, Muslim or of any other religious belief.

I am glad to share my time with the member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has an excellent record on human rights issues in this House and a long service to Canada. He has certainly come to the same conclusion as I, that really we had no alternative as a member of NATO but to do what we did.

However, I also think that certain planning and other things should have been done. It seems that we planned for the military campaign as part of NATO, but we seem to have forgotten that when bombs start to fall one of the natural things that occurs is that the number of refugees tends to increase. In effect, we seem to be doing some of the dirty work of Milosevic in driving more Albanians out of Kosovo.

Could the hon. member comment on the fact that NATO seemed to be very prepared for the military action but not prepared at all for the human consequences of that military action?

In Argentina, Newfoundland we have tried to find a way to open up Canadian government housing for refugees if they were to come to Canada. Many Newfoundlanders were willing to collect toys and clothes and do everything they could for these refugees had they come to Canada, and maybe some of them still will come.

Would the hon. member not agree that NATO certainly prepared for the military campaign but did not take into the account the human consequences of that military campaign?

**Hon. Charles Caccia:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. The issue of refugees is one that prompted the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to make a very fine intervention and to lay out the position of the Government of Canada in its decision to accept refugees. In her speech she recognized the generosity and the spirit of the Canadian people vis-à-vis the movement of refugees in the past and at the present time.

• (2310)

To expect NATO to be equipped to carry out a role in the movement of refugees is probably expecting something that organization is not equipped to carry out. That is probably why there is a UN commission for refugees that has been extremely active, particularly at the border of Macedonia and at the border of Albania.

I am sure that the generosity of the people of Newfoundland will be greatly welcomed and will be reciprocated should refugees decide to come to our shores to settle in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I can say that my colleague opposite has a very strong international conscience and that he weighed his words. I think that, tonight, we must weigh our words. I turned on the TV earlier and saw images that were really difficult to watch.

The means are not that easy, but I would say that we have reached our limit. I think we must wake up and acknowledge that there is a conflict. The night will not be long for us, because we do not have to suffer.

I personally do not have relatives over there, but if I had a sister, a mother, a brother or a child over there, it would be a lot more difficult for me. But one thing is sure: it is still our brothers and sisters who are suffering. And something is wrong with this president: either he is sick or he is cruel. I would prefer to say he is sick. If he is sick, we must see that he gets treatment. If he is cruel, we must at least make him understand his cruelty.

I will come back later with other questions, but I would like to ask my colleague if he would personally have been in favour of a vote following this debate.

**Hon. Charles Caccia:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question.

I share the same feelings he expressed when he talked about images that are difficult to watch and about the pain he feels when he thinks about our brothers and sisters who are suffering.

To answer his question regarding a vote, I have no difficulty supporting the idea of a vote. Tonight, we all have the opportunity to state our position on the deployment of ground troops in Kosovo in the speeches and interventions we are ready to make.

[*English*]

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, like 30 million other Canadians, I salute the courage, resolve and dedication of the men

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and women who serve in Canada's armed forces. Like every other member of parliament, I pray that whatever sacrifices we may ask those brave men and women to make, they are sacrifices based on wisdom. Whatever course we chart for them, let us back it up with every possible means of support from our nation. I had the honour yesterday to tour CFB Trenton. My colleagues in the House and everybody at home would be proud of the facilities for housing and medicine that have been created and set up for the refugees in such a very short time. I express my humble thanks to the people of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the soldiers who have been working so hard around the clock to prepare a possible home for refugees.

● (2315)

As someone who has visited Albania and possibly the only member of parliament who has been in Albania, I want everyone to know how difficult it is and will be for them to take so many refugees because of its own extreme economic difficulties. I hope that the nations of the world providing humanitarian aid will recognize that with real financial assistance to the harbouring countries such as Albania.

While at the Trenton base yesterday I looked in the faces of fine young soldiers and I could not help but think that they are Canada's children and grandchildren. They are fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers so willing to serve and sacrifice, so full of life and promise and so very young. As we make decisions that affect those young lives let us remember that war may be necessary but it is also nasty. War may be noble but it is also numbing to the soul. War may be heroic but it is also horrifying. War may be glorious but it is also gore.

Before victory comes violence. Before triumph comes tragedy. Before defeat of the enemy often comes much death. In the words of Milton, war truly is as terrible as hell.

None of us doubt the need to take on Milosevic and his band of bloody thugs. In this century we have witnessed the monstrous consequences of madmen out of control. We know that pure evil must be driven out. We know that we cannot allow the slaughter of the innocent who are destroyed merely for being different. The action of Milosevic is so barbarous that we cannot find the real words to describe our disgust so we call it ethnic cleansing. We know that what he is doing is giving a wash of hatred to human decency. We know that what he is doing is giving a bath of poison to human dignity.

Choosing when and where to intervene around the world is never easy for democracies. The line is often hazy and fluid but Milosevic is way over the line. He is seeking to empty Kosovo of its citizens by any means possible. For some mad reason he thinks that the ethnic background of Kosovars justifies his cruel and ceaseless campaign against them. The bottom line is that we can see the frightening parallels between Milosevic and past tyrants, and he must be stopped.

That much said, let us as Canadians do everything we can to avoid the mistakes of previous wars. Let us be careful not to demonize Serbian Canadians. While asking them to respect their duty as citizens of a peaceful Canada, let us remind ourselves that they are Canadians. We can all understand their fears while still possibly differing with their point of view. I was particularly concerned when a young Serbian Canadian mother came into my constituency office wondering what she could do to keep her children from being bullied at school. Let us remind ourselves that what we are opposing is Milosevic and his agenda and not innocent Serbians.

Most important, let us be prepared to back our soldiers with more than words if they must move from peacekeepers to peacemakers to wagers of war. We are grateful that so far no Canadian has been a casualty over Kosovo but if and when the stakes are raised so are the risks.

So far Milosevic has proven to be more bent on his wave of destruction than military experts foresaw. The analysts at NATO underestimated what it would take to stop Milosevic. That is understandable. It is tremendously difficult to plumb the depths of evil. Now we know that there are few limits to how far Milosevic is prepared to go. We know the depravity. Now we see the darker side of human nature. If NATO needs to go further let NATO be prepared. Let readiness match resolve. Before we send them forward, let our soldiers have the capacity to meet a master of depravity and the darkness.

● (2320)

If at some point Canada needs to point more of our young soldiers in harm's way, can we be assured that ground troops or any other troops have the proper and finest equipment? Will Canadian troops have proper on site preparation and training? Will our troops have proper backup? More significant, if and when Canada commits ground troops, will all of our NATO partners also commit ground troops?

Canadians do not expect every strategic and tactical decision to be laid out in advance or to be laid out in public. In turn Canadians expect that their concerns expressed in this place by members of parliament to be incorporated into the decision making process. I have absolute confidence in the Prime Minister doing so. That is why this non-partisan debate is so timely and so vital.

Canadian soldiers have long served our nation with pride and long covered our nation with distinction. Fine young Canadians are carrying on with that tradition as we speak now. I admire the bravery of the Canadians who so gallantly wear our forces uniform, but I approach debate on their potential role as combatants with no sense of excitement or joy but rather with a sense of utter seriousness and deep reflection.

We need to give our soldiers every possible guarantee that the resources available to them will match their strength and their sense of duty. We owe it to them. They are the Canadians who will

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make the sacrifices, and we owe them the resources. They are the ones upholding the flame of liberty, and we owe them all our wisdom. They are Canada's children and grandchildren. Let us give them our full support. We owe them that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I got the impression that the hon. member believes that an intervention such as this one by NATO is justified in certain situations.

Could the hon. member tell me if she thinks that an intervention is made under a right to get involved recognized under the international law?

[English]

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Madam Speaker, we have seen some pretty disastrous scenes on television lately. We have gone through wars in the past. I do not like the idea, but I feel we are justified in entering this war.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the member had to say. I was particularly interested in her personal experience of the base at Trenton and what was going on there. I also understand that the member, unlike many of us, has some personal experience in Albania. Could she share those two personal experiences with us?

**Ms. Beth Phinney:** Madam Speaker, maybe I could first say a few words about Albania. I was there three or four years ago. It was the first vote Albania had ever had for democracy, the first vote at all.

They had the communist side and the democratic side. They won on their first vote. Some of them felt they did not. The democrats got 40% of the vote and thought they had lost because they had never had a vote before. They did not understand that still meant they had won because they had their first opposition ever. In the following year they had another election and they won.

It is quite amazing what they are trying to do. The ones who are working earn approximately \$50 a year. They showed me their food, their groceries for the week. They had brown bags and in them they had potatoes and onions. That is what they were eating that week. Mothers were taking their groceries home for their children.

They have done things like cut down all the trees for firewood because they did not have any other means of fire. They had great spirit and were so excited about having their first vote that 99.9% of the people voted in the election. It was quite amazing.

• (2325 )

They are being sent some 300,000 to 500,000 people and will be asked to help them out. That is why I was saying that I was hoping the international countries that will be giving aid will help Albania and other countries like it where the refugees will be going, because the people already in those countries are not much better off than the refugees themselves.

It was pretty exciting at Trenton. The armed forces are working around the clock and have established great facilities. We may not now have to use them but we may need them in the future. They are prepared with 24 hours notice to take in quite a few plane loads of people at one time. Maybe even 1,000 to 2,000 people in a couple of days. They are very prepared and we should be very proud of them.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate, although I must start my comments by saying that it is not the type of debate that I was hoping for today.

Some members have certainly talked about this point already. A take note debate obviously does not generate a lot of interest even from members of parliament, judging from the number of people who have been here tonight. It certainly does not stimulate the kind of interest and the kind of debate we need to involve Canadians in right across the country.

Instead of a take note debate we should be taking part in a full-fledged debate which would end in a vote. The debate should be on focused issues, a clear motion. At the end every member of parliament should know that they will have to stand in the House to take a position either for or against the motion. Certainly that will increase the level of interest and will reach out and involve a lot more Canadians in the debate.

It is unfortunate that is not happening today, but we do have a take note debate and I will be making a few comments in that regard.

To summarize the objectives of the NATO involvement, I start by saying that I fully support Canada standing shoulder to shoulder with our NATO allies in actions in Kosovo.

Three objectives must be considered in this debate. The first is the moral objective. We cannot overstate the case on this issue. The moral objective is the halting of ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing means killing. Ethnic cleansing means the expulsion of people from their homes, the burning of their homes, and the expulsion of people from their country. We must halt this ethnic cleansing. I do not think we can possibly overstate the urgency of dealing with that situation.

The reason we are talking about political and the military objectives is to deal in an effective way with the moral objective of ending the killing, the ethnic cleansing, and with the people who



have been displaced, helping as necessary the refugees who are in camps outside Kosovo and, if need be, bringing refugees to our country, particularly refugees who feel they have no life, no home, nothing back in Kosovo. These are the moral objectives. The importance and urgency of meeting those objectives cannot be overstated.

Of course there are political objectives. These political objectives involve creating a safe home for Kosovars on their own soil. That must be the political objective of everything we are taking part in and it must be done through internationally supervised negotiation.

• (2330)

I have heard many people state today that they believe Russia should be involved in these international negotiations. There is a great deal of value in that and hopefully, that can be accommodated.

To meet these political objectives we have to meet certain military objectives, which is the third objective we have to deal with in this debate. The military objective has to damage the Serbs' military capability to reduce their capacity to kill, to remove people from their homes, to destroy people's homes and to throw people out of the country. We have to reduce their capacity so they cannot do those things. That has to be one of the military objectives. When we get them to that point then we can get them to the negotiating table. We all know it is only through negotiations that we can hope to put an end to this sad situation in Kosovo.

How do we accomplish the military objectives? That is where there has been a lot of disagreement in this House. There is a lot of agreement for the use of NATO air strikes in helping to accomplish this objective. I think there is a lot of support for Canada to continue to participate in these air strikes. I am really pleased at the level of support in this House for that objective.

Also as the member of parliament from Lakeland constituency, I am proud that many of my constituents from the Cold Lake air base are involved in the military operations, are involved in the air strikes. The job they are doing and the commitment they have shown are to be commended. It is important in a situation like this one to show support for the men and women in our forces and for the extremely important role they are playing and I do so right now.

There is a lot of agreement on the use of air strikes. The real difference seems to lie for the most part in the use of ground forces to complete that objective if necessary. There must be two conditions for committing Canadian ground troops. The first is that NATO demonstrate that this commitment in fact is necessary. Can NATO demonstrate that? Has it been able to do this so far? No.

We do not know whether we will need ground troops. We do not know how effective the air strikes are going to be. We have heard differing opinions on that in the House. We have certainly heard

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one opinion from CNN which, after the first three or four days when it could not see any progress, said it ain't working. That is not good enough. We have to give it the time that is needed. We may find that the air strikes will go a long way to solving the problem.

The second condition is that the government must demonstrate to this House that Canada can meet the commitment laid out by NATO.

Madam Speaker, I am splitting my time with the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and so I probably only have two minutes left.

It is important that the government demonstrate to this House and to Canadians that Canadians will be able to meet the commitment and do the job that NATO delegates to them. That decision is to be made by the chief of the defence staff. That is the role of the chief of the defence staff.

• (2335)

It is the role of the government, the role of this House and not just the role of the governing party, to determine what Canada's involvement should be. It is the role of the chief of the defence staff to determine what our military capabilities are. That is critical and that job must be left to the chief of the defence staff.

Those are some of the military considerations.

I would like to close by asking the minister of immigration a few questions with regard to refugees and Canada's commitment to accepting refugees who have been displaced from Kosovo. What is the minister's position on this issue? It is unclear to me.

Last week the minister said that she would accept 5,000 refugees on a temporary basis. By last Friday she said she would accept refugees only if they intended to stay in Canada permanently. Today the minister is saying that she will accept certain Kosovar Albanians if they themselves express the desire to come to Canada. They would come not as refugees but through normal immigration channels. I would appreciate clarification by the minister.

I get one message from Mr. Girard who went to Kosovar and evaluated the situation and another message from the minister. It is very important that this be clarified. I look forward to the minister's clarification.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the hon. member's remarks. I commend him for his insight into this matter. All of us in the House have learned a great deal throughout the course of this debate and the member has added to that information sharing session.

The member speaks of the preconditions for the possibility of ground troops becoming involved. Quite rightly he and his leader have both pointed out the necessity of further information as to

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Canada's role in terms of doing everything possible to achieve a peaceful solution to this and also the assurance that is needed with respect to the protection of our fighting forces if it should come to that. We are now painfully and sadly aware that our Canadian armed forces are ill equipped should it come to the eventual inevitability that ground forces might be sent and Canadian armed forces personnel would be in harm's way.

Does the hon. member feel that another consideration which might lead to that is the information that seems to be readily available that perhaps greater atrocities are currently taking place such as the murder of the 100,000 Kosovar men who appear to be missing within the boundaries of Yugoslavia? Should that also be a major consideration in the determination of a potential ground force deployment?

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Madam Speaker, if the objective of this military involvement is to meet a moral obligation to protect Kosovars, clearly if an atrocity such as that has occurred, then the urgency has been stepped up another major notch. If that has occurred, we know it will probably happen again. The urgency is beyond anything I can express and certainly it is a critical consideration.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, if the Progressive Conservative member is right when he says that 100,000 men have disappeared, it may be that this is no longer ethnic cleansing but genocide.

• (2340)

If we were to discover that the Serb government and the security forces of Slobodan Milosevic are guilty of genocide, would that justify very quickly the sending of ground troops into Kosovo?

[*English*]

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Madam Speaker, that is a very difficult question. It is a question I think none of us would like to be facing alone, which is all the more reason that we should have had a complete debate followed by a vote in the House. That decision should be made with a lot of input from Canadians.

If we did find that such a genocide had occurred, I still believe that the three main objectives would have to be followed through on and the two conditions for the military objective would still have to be in place. In other words, is the bombing doing the job? Is it going to lead to the Yugoslavs, whether it be Milosevic or someone else, getting to the negotiating table? Is this bombing going to do the job and force that to happen?

I do not think those questions have been answered yet. It still may be effective. Even if we find this has happened, that has to be evaluated by people who know far more than I do.

Second, if the government cannot demonstrate to the House, with the input from the chief of the defence staff, that our Canadian troops are capable of carrying out the task given them by the NATO command, then why would we put our Canadian troops at risk? If it can be demonstrated and if we do find out that the bombing is not going to prevent atrocities like this from happening, if this has happened already and if there is some belief that it could be happening again very soon, then in that case I would fully support the immediate use of ground troops, including Canadian ground troops.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, if history has taught us anything, it is that we have learned nothing. Across the world, from Angola, Sierra Leone to the Sudan we have seen countries implode and thousands of civilians killed. In fact 90% of the casualties that are borne in the wars of today are innocent civilians, unlike what happened in the first part of the century. What all these situations have in common is they demonstrate an abysmal failure on the part of the international community to get involved before thousands of people have been killed and countries have been laid to waste.

Kosovo is the latest of those countries, the one that is the apple of the eye of the media, the one that is drawing the most attention. It is by no means that which is going to be the greatest in terms of death and destruction in our world today.

As I said before, in Sierra Leone hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and thousands more are killed every day. In northern Uganda 10,000 child soldiers between the ages of eight and twelve are committing horrendous atrocities and thousands of young girls of the same age are used as sexual concubines. No one hears about that, no one talks about it and no one cares.

The situation in front of us is one where we had some very difficult choices to make, to act or not to act in the face of Kosovo. With the memory of Croatia and the memory of the atrocities of Banja Luka, Srebrenica, Bihac and Sarajevo fresh in our minds, we chose thankfully to act. And act we did, perhaps not in the best way, but we acted.

There were a number of obligations and end points we wanted to accomplish. The first was the most important, to save the innocent civilians' lives. The second was to bring Slobodan Milosevic to the table to engage in a diplomatic solution to this problem.

The fact is Milosevic is not at the table and while we were bombing Belgrade, the ethnic cleansing continued. The reason is simply that bombing will not stop ethnic cleansing, or should I use the proper term, mass murder, that takes place door to door, person to person, eyeball to eyeball. That will not stop it, although I must say that I applaud and support the government's support of NATO's bombing in the federal republic of Yugoslavia.

• (2345)

Our current objective has several goals. The moral obligation is to save people's lives. No one disagrees with that. The political obligation is to get Milosevic back to the table and stop further ethnic cleansing. It is also to engage in a diplomatic solution.

I would argue that the diplomatic solution put forward at Rambouillet, France is now a dead duck. The notion of an autonomous Kosovo will not happen. Too much blood has been shed, too many people have been killed and the memories last a very long time. These people, quite frankly, are not going to live together.

How are we going to deal with this problem? I would proffer the following solutions to deal with the situation in Kosovo; solutions which I put forth in a motion last October in the House, which unfortunately was not taken up.

The first solution is to protect innocent civilians. The way to do that is to organize a safe haven in the southern part of Kosovo. This can be accomplished with minimal or no casualties on the part of the west, but it will involve ground troops. Ground troops are required to engage in a safe haven in southern Kosovo and those ground troops, in my view, should be European Union troops. The reason is that they were tasked five years ago to deal with the impending implosion of the former Yugoslavia and they sat on their hands. They sat on their hands and thousands of people were killed, maimed and left homeless.

The European Union troops could engage in this, which would accomplish the following. First, it would protect the Kosovar Albanians. Second, it would enable humanitarian aid to get to these people safely and efficiently. Third, if these people are going to be repatriated at the end of a politically organized solution, then it is far easier for them to be repatriated while in their own backyard than for them to be repatriated while spread far afield. It will not do to send these people all over the world and expect that at some point in the future they will somehow wind up back in Kosovo. That simply is not going to happen.

It would involve the partition of Kosovo. As I said before, these people are not going to live together. Why I think this is doable is that Milosevic wants the northern half of Kosovo because that is where the Field of Black Birds is and that is where the seat of Serbian nationalism comes from. That is primarily what he wants, along with some mines which I think are less relevant.

If we try to bring the two together it will involve a ground war and a lot of allied troops being killed. At best, it will be apparent victory. At worst, NATO will back down because of the number of body bags returning home and, as a result, NATO will lose an enormous amount of credibility; credibility that it would take a very long time to regain. A ground war is not something that anybody has the stomach for.

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The long term political solution must involve Serbians coming to the table, but how do we do this? One of our failures has been to assume that Mr. Milosevic deals with the same moral framework that we do. He does not. He is the one who is responsible for the slaughter in Bosnia. He is the one who instigated the slaughter which we saw in the towns of Srebrenica, Bihac and Banja Luka. He is the one who engaged in a ground war with Croatia. He is the one who is largely responsible, with his leadership, for the implosion of the former Yugoslavia.

We have to recognize that we are not dealing with a familiar creature. In fact, I would liken him to Hitler. Appeasement was attempted in the late 1930s when Hitler was committing atrocities. It did not work then and it certainly will not work today. We have to use a different framework to deal with a creature like Slobodan Milosevic.

First, to bring him to the table will mean engaging in bombing, but I think it has to happen.

Second, we could use economic levers through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Both of those groups have enormously powerful economic levers to apply to any country and they must be applied to the federal republic of Yugoslavia. If we choke off the money supply we greatly diminish the ability of Milosevic to carry out a war for any lengthy period of time.

• (2350)

Third is something we have not looked upon which is the propaganda war. Many people in Serbia are falling behind their leader partly as a result of the bombing we have engaged in. Any time a country is bombed it is more likely the people no matter how much they despise their leader, will fall behind their leader not out of support for the individual but out of support for their country.

Therefore we have to get into the propaganda game. We need to use short-wave radio. The UN and other groups have the capability of beaming in what is taking place in Kosovo. We need to use television to demonstrate what is taking place in Kosovo and also the atrocities that took place in Croatia and in Bosnia. The people in Serbia do not know what their leadership has been up to and it is high time they did. If we are going to undermine Mr. Milosevic we have to do it from within. The easiest and most efficient way is by informing the Serbian public of what he is responsible for.

It is important for us to demonstrate and articulate to the Serbian people that our problem is not with them but with their leadership. I am sure that the Serbian people, like other people of the former Yugoslavia, want peace, that they want to live in harmony. Let us not forget that 10% of the population of Kosovo is Serbian. They have no stomach for killing as I am sure the vast majority of Kosovar Albanians have no stomach for killing. Unfortunately we see the manipulation by political leaderships to engage in war or to compromise their people at any price.

At the end of the day we have the Kosovo situation and we will have more Kosovos as time passes. I have been in war situations. I have seen people with their legs blown off from land mines. I have seen teenagers hold their bowels in their hands after being eviscerated by guerrillas. They did not want their bowels to fall on the ground. These are innocent people who did not ask for this.

I implore the government to try to change its foreign policy from one of conflict management to one of conflict prevention. I introduced a motion which will come up for debate on Monday. It articulates a way in which we can move our foreign policy from one of conflict management to one of conflict prevention. It articulates a series of methods for identifying the precursors to conflict and pragmatic tools such as the use of diplomacy and economic levers that have not been explored to prevent conflict from occurring.

It has been encouraging to see people across this House work together for the common goal of peace. I look forward to the future debates we may have to make sure Canada stands in the forefront of saving people's lives. We have in the past and we will in the future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask our colleague from the Reform Party, who suggested that we put the emphasis on the prevention of disputes and that we set up a prevention mechanism, what international organization should be responsible for such a mechanism.

[English]

Should it be the UN? Should it be the OSCE? Or should NATO itself be involved in the prevention and the settlement of disputes?

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. We are lacking in leadership in the world today. In the post cold war situation we have to develop a new framework within which to work.

Some people have made the mistake of believing that NATO can get involved in conflicts as far away as Africa and the Far East. NATO's obligation is within its name, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It deals with that area of Europe and North America.

As the member alluded to, we have to engage in ways to deal with conflict all over the world. There are three bodies that can do this. The first is the United Nations. Kosovo demonstrates the failure of the UN. The security council rooted in its 1945 organization needs to be revamped. The IMF and the World Bank are the other two organizations that make up the three organized at Bretton

Woods in 1945. They can engage in economic actions against a country that is engaging in behaviours that compromise international and regional security.

● (2355)

The argument in support of that is that countries engaging in a flagrant abuse of human rights and local or international security are an economic threat to those areas. They are engaging in bad economics. Why should the international community put money into countries that might use that money to buy arms to abuse people or engage in or support a conflict in their area? They do not have to. Within the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations lies the tools that can be utilized. I might add that the United Nations is the toughest nut to crack.

While we are on the security council we need to have the courage to articulate the tough solutions that have to be put forward to enable the United Nations to change from being completely and utterly unable to deal with conflicts in a proactive manner to a body that can. There are many arguments to be made for that from a humanitarian argument to a cold-hearted economic argument.

The bottom line is that we have been on the security council for a year and a half. I implore the Minister of Foreign Affairs to talk very forcefully about revamping and restructuring the security council to broaden its number of members and to remove the veto from all of them.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his speech. I thought it was very thoughtful.

I wanted to ask him if he looked at the situation over the last two, three or four weeks and questioned himself. Does he think the role of NATO in this exercise has reduced hostilities or exacerbated the situation?

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Madam Speaker, that is a difficult question but I thank my hon. member for asking it. The litmus test in all this is our prime objective of saving the lives of innocent civilians.

Clearly Mr. Milosevic was engaging in a process of ethnic cleansing. Perhaps NATO was brought in late but it was brought in and saved the lives of some people. Not as many as it should have because of the tardiness involved. As I mentioned in my speech there are other things NATO could have been involved in. I do not think it has increased the hostilities. What we saw happen would have only happened in a more extreme fashion and we would have seen more innocent lives being taken.

[Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Volume B]



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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, April 12, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 12, 1999

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### KOSOVO

[*Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Volume A*]

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, before I start my speech this evening I would like to advise that I will be sharing my time with the member for Peterborough.

I rise this evening at this late hour to support Canada's involvement in Kosovo to stop the systematic campaign of terror being perpetrated and led by Slobodan Milosevic against the innocent civilians of Kosovo.

First and foremost I thank our Canadian fighter pilots and the peacekeeping troops for putting their lives on the line to carry out their missions against Yugoslav military and security forces with skill and courage. All Canadians can be proud of their performance.

Almost three weeks ago NATO commenced its operation allied force. I submit that it had no further option when it did so. As Canadians and members of the international community we could no longer stand by and tolerate the actions of a government which denied the most basic rights to its people, sending tanks, troops and artillery to destroy villages, barbarically taking the lives of innocent civilians, and forcing hundreds of thousands of people including women and children out of their homes.

We have witnessed the pillage and agony too vividly for almost a decade. The actions of President Milosevic and his authorities constitute the last horrendous crime of this century. The crimes continue to be perpetrated. This weekend we again heard of reports of alleged rapes. We have seen aerial views of alleged massive grave sites.

Enough is enough. Genocide and ethnic cleansing cannot and will not be tolerated any longer.

• (2400 )

That is the message that operation allied force is sending to President Milosevic, the Serbian government and the people who stand up and support those policies and, in some instances, carry

them out. That is also the message that we, as Canadians and members of NATO, must unanimously reaffirm tonight. I would encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the House to do so.

Over the last week questions have arisen in the media as to why Canada, which has an international reputation for peacekeeping, is so deeply involved in the attack on Milosevic's forces. Why is Canada dropping bombs instead of pursuing peace?

Let it be absolutely clear that Canada's strongest preference remains a negotiated settlement to the crisis based on the Rambouillet agreement.

I also believe that Canada's participation in NATO is not a brand new direction in Canada's foreign policy. Our participation in the NATO air strikes is based on furthering Canada's human security issues agenda, the very same agenda on which Canada campaigned for a seat on the United Nations security council.

Human security is a concept which responds to the changing nature of conflict in the late 20th century where wars are increasingly fought within, not between states. New strategies are needed for addressing today's civil conflicts not only because of the threat that they pose to international peace and security, but because of the toll in civilian suffering that they extract.

Human security extends beyond the traditional security paradigm centred on conflict resolution between states by addressing such issues as poverty, refugees, human rights, governance and the rule of law, and other cross-cutting issues such as transnational crime, terrorism and environmental degradation. The land mines campaign and the follow up is an example of successful international action to tackle a key human security concern.

Last week our Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered an address to the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Relations at Princeton, New Jersey, wherein he confirmed that our government's decision to send Canadian pilots to war was based on our policy of furthering and protecting human security. In his speech he stated:

If Kosovo symbolizes how human security has become a focus of attention and concern for the international community, NATO's response demonstrates how the defence of human security has become a force for global action.

NATO is engaged in Kosovo to restore human security to the Kosovars. It was and is the humanitarian imperative that has galvanized the alliance to act.

*Government Orders*

Critics state that the proper way to resolve this issue was through the United Nations and that Canada with a seat at the security council had a duty to ensure that the resolution to this crisis took place at the security council.

The fact is that the United Nations security council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN charter, issued crucial resolutions that identified the conflict in Kosovo as a threat to peace and security in the regions. In fact, Resolutions 1199 and 1203 and the October agreements between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and NATO imposed a clear obligation on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to respect a ceasefire, protect the civilian population and limit the deployment of its security forces in Kosovo. Yet the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia breached all of its obligations under the United Nations security council resolutions and under the Belgrade agreements of October 1998.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was intransigent and all efforts to reach a negotiated settlement were rendered futile.

There is no doubt that Canada would have preferred the United Nations security council to explicitly authorize NATO's mission and Canada worked hard to encourage the council to pass such a resolution. However, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated last week, "certain members of the council would not reconcile yesterday's assumptions about sovereignty with today's imperatives of human emergency".

I believe as the Minister of Foreign Affairs believes that the notion of human security has transcended classic notions of the nation state and sovereignty.

• (2405)

Critics who believe that NATO has no legal right to attack a sovereign state are overly simplistic in their analysis. While Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty signed in Washington on April 4, 1949 defined the case of the alliance as a collective defence against armed attack, the nationalisms of the Balkans and the Caucasus that helped spark World War I became resurgent.

This produced non-Article 5 missions such as the peacekeeping force in Bosnia. As Craig R. Whitney wrote in Sunday's *New York Times*, "the war is teaching NATO what its role is". Mr. Whitney noted:

Like it or not, the role of NATO is being defined in practice in Kosovo, not on paper in Washington.

The role right now is that of a bulwark against the consequences of ethnic instability in Europe's southeastern rim. For that, much more than Russian nuclear bombs, is today the biggest threat to European security as it was a century ago.

Mr. Whitney goes on to note:

—if NATO cannot defeat the effort of President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia to drive the ethnic Albanian population out of the ancient Serbian province of Kosovo, the alliance risks going the way of the League of Nations and other failed 20th century attempts to deal with the same ethnic instability.

As Canada and other leaders of NATO meet in Washington next week to celebrate NATO's 50th anniversary, it will also be a time to discuss and chart a new strategic concept as it defines its role in the 21st century.

I hope the concept of the missions of human rights and human security are first and foremost on the NATO leaders' agenda. This is also an issue in which Canada can play a lead role at the United Nations security council; by working toward a universal set of conditions and limits for actions in favour of human security.

Last week, when addressing the criticism about Canada's role in NATO and its unprecedented interference with state sovereignty, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated as follows:

It is curious that far from weakening state sovereignty, action to support human security—to the extent that it supports democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights—can serve to reinforce stability. Similarly, the very same countries that argue against humanitarian intervention on the basis of sovereignty are the most anxious to join trade and commercial organizations, which by their nature involve creating a certain amount of international control. It is hard to understand why it is acceptable to sacrifice sovereignty for economic interests, but not in the human interest.

Last but not least, let us send a very strong message today from the House of commons to President Milosevic and his authorities that Canada, along with its NATO allies, is determined that Kosovo's two million people should be left in peace to govern themselves under international protection.

If we do not prevail more atrocities will undoubtedly unfold. As we approach the next millennium, we in the international community have a duty to ensure that the human atrocities that we have watched over the last 10 years cease and desist immediately. As we enter the new millennium we must also ensure that these atrocities never happen again.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Parkdale—High Park who, at this late hour, is brimming with energy and is keeping members awake. I congratulate her on this.

I would also like to quote for her benefit the preamble to the United Nations charter, which begins with the following words:

We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.

However, it would appear that one country is no longer a true member of the UN. Moreover, Yugoslavia's status within the UN is rather unique, given the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. One country has failed to uphold the principles of this charter, but

because of a veto right, the UN cannot intervene as it really should in the conflict in Kosovo.

• (2410)

There is one thing the UN could do. The hon. member from the Liberal Party maintains that we are witnessing a genocide. She used the word “genocide”. This afternoon, the Prime Minister hesitated to use the word again when reminded that this was the word he had used previously.

Would the hon. member who is talking about a genocide support the idea of the Government of Canada bringing Yugoslavia up on charges before the International Court of Justice and calling on this court to rule that Yugoslavia has indeed violated the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide?

[*English*]

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte:** Madam Speaker, unlike the hon. member, I am not an expert in international law. I thank him for quoting the preamble to the charter for the United Nations.

Before I answer his last question, it is imperative to remember that the United Nations did pass two resolutions, especially 1199, which stated that Kosovo was in a state of crisis. I believe it was the hon. member who told me why we are not using the United Nations. It was because of the veto powers of both China and Russia that we could not use the United Nations fully.

In answer to the member, yes, we absolutely should use the international war crimes court. I am not an authority on who should be brought to justice at this time, but if war atrocities are committed, Canada, as a leader in the international community of peacekeepers and as defenders of human security issues, should do whatever is possible and right to bring these people to justice as soon as possible. We have seen these atrocities on television and over the last 10 years in the Balkans. We should make sure these atrocities never occur either in the Balkans or anywhere else in the world.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I have a comment and perhaps a quick question for the hon. member across the way.

Today during debate the Leader of the Official Opposition very clearly laid forward the fact that the official opposition would reluctantly support the use of ground troops if it became necessary provided two conditions were met.

The first condition would have to be that NATO could very clearly show that a commitment of ground troops was necessary in order to halt the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and provide a safe home for Kosovars in the region.

### *Government Orders*

Secondly, the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition went on to say that it would be necessary for the government to very clearly show to the House of Commons that our troops had the tools to do the job.

I wonder if the hon. member would support that type of position. Furthermore, would she support the use of democracy in this country whereby if ground troops became necessary we would have a debate in the House and it would be put to a vote?

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte:** Madam Speaker, I would submit it is trite to say that I believe in democracy. I believe that the atrocities that are happening in the Balkans must stop.

As a private citizen, for years I watched on TV what was happening in Bosnia. I would ask my children, my friends and my family why the government was not doing anything to stop the atrocities. I wondered why had we not stopped them before.

I am proud to be sitting in this House and to be a member of a government that has decided to be part of an alliance to do everything possible, based on the tools and resources available, to safeguard the lives of the Canadian peacekeepers who are over there and to stand up to a monster like Milosevic.

I will stand in here and defend the government for whatever it feels it has to do to stop monsters like Milosevic from doing what they are doing in the Balkans and anywhere else in the world.

• (2415 )

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when humans were organized into tribes, bound together by family ties, language and religion it was easy to fight their neighbour who was clearly different.

Today in Canada we have a wonderful new type of nation. Our citizens include the very diverse first nations people who speak a range of languages which extend beyond our borders and who may well have relatives in other countries.

In Canada we have representatives of more than 200 nations of the world who speak hundreds of languages and who belong to all of the world's major religions.

Over the weekend I was told of a housing project in Toronto where the kids speak 80 languages.

The majority of Canadians have kin abroad. It is virtually impossible for a nation like this to engage in a dispute with another country without it being a dispute with some Canadian families or with people who have linguistic or religious ties with Canada.

*Government Orders*

Today, for the third time, we are debating a conflict in the former Yugoslavia. This is a part of the world where the ethnic, linguistic and religious mix, although nothing like the scale of our mix in Canada, is quite remarkable. As an inevitable result the ties with Canada are, to say the least, intricate.

In my riding we have two first nations and some 70 first and second generation nationalities. We have Serb Canadians, Albanian Canadians, Greek Canadians and Macedonian Canadians who talk on the phone to relatives in the zone of conflict. Some of these people came to Canada to get away from the clutches of Mr. Milosevic. We have church groups, Christian and Muslim, that have strong ties over there. As the House can imagine, the views of these Canadians who share a common region of origin are often very different.

I am glad that Canada is not a tribal society. I am glad that it is not easy for us to fight our neighbours. I hope that it never will be.

In my riding there is a wide range of opinion about the conflict in Kosovo. There are people who are opposed to NATO involvement. Some simply want the bombing to stop. One person compared the NATO actions to those of the Nazis. He said that it is like the Nazis practising with high tech weapons on civilians.

There are people who are very much in favour of the NATO action, who feel that we should escalate the action in the air and on the ground rapidly to finish off Mr. Milosevic off once and for all. I believe that the vast majority of people in Peterborough support the NATO action, but with sadness. That is why there has been such an outpouring of support in cash and kind for Kosovo and neighbouring countries from people who support the NATO action.

Never before have I known an international crisis that has resulted in large numbers of people offering space in their homes for refugees. One couple in Peterborough specified that they wanted to have a family with at least three children to make good use of their spacious home. Nurses and translators from Peterborough have offered to travel to reception points in Canada and to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Government of Canada has already committed more than \$20 million in aid at a time when we are engaged in this conflict.

Canada is not a nation which enters into conflict easily, with the idea of pounding some other nation. Most people support the NATO action as a necessary evil, something that they believe has to be done.

Last October when the House first debated this matter people on the street often mentioned Rwanda as a missed opportunity. They would say that if only we had gone in earlier we could have saved half a million people. Today those who contact me with offers of aid are saying the same thing. The fact that we are in the first hour of the Holocaust Memorial Day now reminds us of another case where timely intervention would have prevented a tragedy.

In the first debate last October I had the strong feeling that we were raising the ante so that Mr. Milosevic would back down. It was a bit like a union giving its executive a strike mandate, with each member secretly hoping that a strike would not be necessary. In most labour-management negotiations a strike is not necessary. The same is true of many of the actions of the international community. Diplomatic and economic pressure usually does the trick, but this time more serious action was necessary.

• (2420 )

In the debate last October 7 the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out that we were faced with a humanitarian tragedy and that 300,000 people were on the move. That was six months ago and there are now a million people on the move. Conditions in Kosovo have become much worse.

Can we stand by when this sort of ethnic cleansing is going on? Surely we should learn from experiences like Rwanda and the 1930s leading up to World War II.

As I said, it is not easy for a country like Canada to enter into a conflict like this; it never was and it never should be.

Until recently the colour sergeant of the Peterborough legion was a man who immigrated to Canada just before World War II. He volunteered and served through the war, much of the time in campaigns in which his brothers were on the other side. As a new Canadian he had to make a very difficult personal decision to volunteer to fight in that war. So did tens of thousands of others in our armed forces.

It was not easy for Canada to go to war then; it is not easy now, but let no one doubt our resolve when we decide on a course of action. We were right then; we are right now. We are engaged in this tragic conflict today out of firm conviction. Our intention is to halt ethnic terrorism in Kosovo and prevent its spread in that region. Our intention is to show that the international community is resolved on matters such as this.

Let us continue to exert all forms of diplomatic pressure to achieve a political settlement. Let us hope that Mr. Milosevic will soon realize that we are serious so that he will allow Kosovo to develop in peace as an example to the world of diverse peoples living together.

Let us pray for all those in this troubled region and for their families, wherever they may be.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, despite the late hour, it is almost 12.30 a.m. here in Ottawa, it is really prime time out in British Columbia, about 9.30 p.m. I suspect that a lot of my constituents from Prince George—Peace River who have expressed deep concern to me and to my offices in the riding over the past few weeks about the war in



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Kosovo and Serbia will be watching this debate tonight with great interest.

Despite the late hour, it is a pleasure for me to participate in this take note debate. However, it is unfortunate that it is just a take note debate.

Before we committed troops to the air war we had a debate in the House, but we have never really had a full blown debate on this issue and we have never had a vote in the House of Commons on such an important issue. One of the big issues that came up repeatedly today in question period was the lack of commitment on the part of the Prime Minister to uphold democracy and to put this issue to a vote.

It has been clarified by all the speakers for the official opposition tonight and by the leader earlier this afternoon that we support NATO involvement in the Balkans. As all members have said and as I have heard repeatedly tonight, even from the government side, it is very reluctant support that all of us give to this war that we find ourselves in, but it is necessary. I believe that the majority of Canadians across the land are supportive as well.

• (2425 )

I say that with a certain degree of sadness. When this began there were greatly mixed emotions and feelings across the land about the issue, whether NATO should be involved or whether there was any legal means for NATO to be doing the things that it began to do with the air strikes and cruise missiles going into Belgrade, other cities and military locations throughout Serbia.

Over the course of time, as one would suspect, when citizens in a free and democratic country are confronted nightly on the news with the appalling scenes of misery, death and destruction that have been perpetrated on the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, public opinion has swung quite decidedly.

In speaking with the people of Prince George—Peace River I have heard some conflict in opinion over the past few weeks, but generally speaking they understand why we are there and they understand what we are endeavouring to accomplish.

I would like to talk about the Rambouillet accord and its failure to bring about a negotiated settlement. The accord was brokered by the UN security council contact group, which includes Russia. There are three conditions in the Rambouillet accord: that Kosovo must remain an integral part of Serbia; that Kosovo would get some broad autonomy in its operations; and that 28,000 international troops would be placed in Kosovo to monitor its implementation and to keep the peace.

I heard from a constituent in my riding, Professor Jernej Polajnar of the University of Northern British Columbia, and I welcome his input. Professor Polajnar is much more of an authority on the conflict in the Balkans than I probably ever will be. He notes that

the main sticky point between the position of Kosovo and that of President Milosevic is the third condition, that 28,000 troops have to be in place to keep the peace in Kosovo.

I was quite pleased that following the Prime Minister's speech earlier today he was asked whether there was not some room on that issue to look at a truly international force rather than a NATO force. This is an important point because NATO is viewed by Serbians as the aggressor. I am not speaking just of Milosevic; I am talking about the Serbian people. There are a lot of reasons for that. Probably one of them is the lack of open media in Serbia to get an unfiltered message out.

Why would the average Serbian, who has bombs and cruise missiles raining down upon them nightly, want to capitulate to the third condition and see NATO troops being the ones supposedly keeping the peace? I would submit that is absurd. Of course they will not.

If there is some room to manoeuvre on this point Canada should be actively engaging the Russians or perhaps the Finns. I am not an authority on which countries would be the best to approach, but I am sure there must be some countries that would be more acceptable to the Serbian people to play the role of peacekeepers in Kosovo than NATO. If that is the biggest sticking point, then I suggest we must look at moving on from that third point of the Rambouillet accord.

• (2430 )

Certainly I am not privy to the diplomatic efforts being made by our government to actively approach the Russians and others to get them involved and to encourage them to come forward with a plan in which they would participate, to play that role as peacekeepers.

I am very fortunate as a member of parliament to have a weekly column in the newspapers in my riding. There are a number of them because it is a large rural riding. I wrote a column a couple of weeks ago on this subject. I said in the column, as all members have said during the debate, that I reluctantly supported the military intervention because I saw it as a last resort, that we had to do something.

I used the example of the appalling loss of life that took place in Rwanda. It is estimated that 800,000 people lost their lives in that conflict while the world sat back and watched. I suggested in the column that we simply could not do that in all good conscience. We have a moral obligation and responsibility as free and democratic people and we must intercede and do what we can to try to prevent that from happening in Kosovo. I believe we are endeavouring to do that.

Canadians must grapple with the question of whether we should commit our own troops to try to prevent that type of genocide. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot sit in front of our televisions saying "Oh my God, why doesn't someone do something", and

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then condemn the government if it acts and does something to try to prevent it.

That was my message in my column. It was fairly well received according to the feedback from my constituents. People generally understand that there has to be a reckoning for Milosevic and his type.

As I said at the outset, the official opposition and I support the continuing air war, but there must be some strong conditions and there must be an open honest debate if we ever get to the next step. We are probably going to have to look at the insertion of ground troops in Kosovo. We definitely must have a vote in the House of Commons if and when that takes place.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, would my colleague support the use of ground troops in the former Yugoslavia if necessary?

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition said so well this afternoon, the official opposition would support the use of ground troops if a couple of conditions were met.

The first condition is that NATO would have to very clearly show it was necessary, that it was a reluctant last resort in order to prevent the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing of the ethnic Albanians and the Kosovars.

The second condition put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was a very obvious one, the protection of our own armed forces. During the five years I have been a member of parliament there has been a lot of debate in the House of Commons about the terrible state of equipment for our armed forces. The government has consistently said that our armed forces is well equipped to do the job, yet under the management of this government the defence resources have shrunk from a budget of \$12 billion to about \$9.3 billion. I for one cannot understand how we can expect our armed forces to do the job when we do not give them the tools.

• (2435)

Yes, we are supportive if it is proven necessary that we must put ground troops in Kosovo. The reality is if we are going to do that, we must ensure that our sons and daughters are properly equipped to do the job they are asked to do.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about the conditions that have been proposed to bring peace to the Kosovo region. He also talked about the fact that we may need to encourage those conditions to be put in place or renegotiated with the use of ground troops.

Has he had any feedback from his constituents? Have they given some thought to the kind of results Canadians would need to see in

order to justify risking the lives of Canadian troops in Kosovo? Does the member believe the government has satisfied him and other members of the House that those conditions would in fact be met?

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question.

Yes, I have. I think every member on both sides of the House over the last number of weeks and indeed months has had a substantial amount of input from their constituents out of concern for this.

One of the big concerns is the potential for escalation of this conflict. It is a great worry because of the close ties between Russia and the former Yugoslavia and the position that Russia has taken in backing away since its involvement in the Rambouillet accord. It has really backed away because of the military action of NATO.

The real problem is a lack of communication of a plan by this government. The vast majority of Canadians are wondering exactly what the plan is and what the conditions are where we would say that we have been successful and that NATO has been successful.

We can all be impassioned, speak emotionally about the issue and our concern for the Kosovars. The only way we can judge that is when they are back in their homes, but in many cases they do not have homes to go back to.

We have to have a great deal more debate and discussion on this issue. We have to have a firm plan put forward by the government on what it will consider to be a success. I have not seen that happen to date.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it would be a good idea if we refreshed our memories about the motion being debated this afternoon and now into the wee hours of the morning. I would like to read it again for those who are following this debate. I know many Canadians are following the debate. The motion that the government has put forward for this debate is this:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo that leads to the safe return of the refugees.

This motion is long on rhetoric but terribly short on specifics. I do not want to be unkind to government members, some of whom I know have spoken from the heart, but they have been long on rhetoric, long on compassion, long on "we can never let this happen again", but very short on practicalities.

The simple fact is that this is happening. This has been happening around the world for the last number of years, in the killing fields of Cambodia, in Somalia, in the Sudan, in Rwanda, in Ethiopia, in Central America, and the list goes on.

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To simply say that it will make the world safe and happy for everyone" is nonsense. The government has put forward no plan at all. There are no specifics. There is no goal in mind that the government has articulated in a meaningful and practical way or an action plan as to how it can be achieved. The government is simply saying it will do something.

● (2440)

If the government is to have a determination to work with the international community, there should be some specifics. That is why the Leader of the Opposition put forward an amendment to the motion which says that the government must specify the moral, political and military objectives of Canada's involvement with NATO in the region.

What are the moral, political and military objectives? Although our leader outlined what we think they are, the government needs to be up front with Canadians about what these objectives truly are. If it wants to accept the proposals, the definition and the specifics we have put forward, that is well and good. If the government does not like those, what is its moral objective? What is the wrong that we intend to right?

The government motion says to take note of the continuing human tragedy and work to resolve the conflict. What wrong are we trying to right? As other members have pointed out, although genocide has been committed against Albanians by Serbians, in the past it has been the other way around. The Kosovo Liberation Army has been labelled by many international observers as a terrorist organization.

Exactly what wrong are we trying to right? Let us be specific. What justice are we seeking to establish? We need to know these things. We need to be specific about them. How can we achieve objectives that have not yet been identified or defined? It is nonsense. We cannot just get up and put our hands over our hearts and say that this is terrible, that the pictures we see are terrible and not specify our objectives. The atrocities which are happening are terrible, cruel, horrible and unthinkable in Canada. Unless we specify exactly what our objectives are, we are never going to meet them. Unless we know where we are going, we are not going to get there.

Let us talk about the political objectives. I suggest that is the administrative framework to support the moral results that we have identified. What administrative framework is going to be put into place?

My colleague talked about the Rambouillet plan and the fact that it may need some adjustment. We are speculating. We are not in the NATO councils and the international discussions that the government representatives are. At best the government has been vague about what things are being talked about.

What are we trying to achieve as far as a political framework and an administrative framework in order to make sure that the justice we are seeking, and which we should specify, is actually going to be enforced and administered? We have to talk about the military objective. We have to have an action plan.

We have to specify the resources that are going to be necessary to carry out the action plan. As many members of the opposition have pointed out, we do not have the resources. It is ludicrous for us to parade around pretending that we are going to achieve something when we have divested ourselves of many of the resources that we will need to achieve those objectives.

Our military capacity has been depleted over the last two years by deliberate policies of the government. Our defence critic, the member for Calgary Northeast, made a number of observations about our forces and their unreadiness and lack of equipment. Those questions have to be answered. The government did not even address them.

The government says that we are going to get in there and we are going to fight to protect people. With what? With how many troops? With what equipment? The French were giving our troops axe handles earlier on to beat off the wild dogs. They did not have equipment to protect themselves, never mind innocent Kosovars and Albanians. Governments have reduced the size and capabilities of our military by 50% during the last decade. On what basis are we to come forward and protect people in other countries? This is a sorry tale.

● (2445)

Over and over the issues of old equipment, unsafe equipment and increasingly stressed out soldiers are raised in the House. While our helicopters fall from the sky or cannot get off the ground, our defence minister says we would never have unsafe equipment for our troops. That is nonsense. It flies in the face of facts and the things that happen every day. We have to talk about these things.

What does the government do? It puts forward a soft, mushy motion and says that it will promote a just settlement and safety. Let us be specific. We have to tell Canadians about this because we are asking them to support these measures. Huge tax dollars go into these kinds of missions. In spite of the Prime Minister's assurances that no ground troops are being considered, we know they are. The government's own defence minister has said it was under consideration.

If we are to ask our fathers and mothers, our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives, our brothers and sisters to go into another part of the world to carry out unspecified objectives with a lack of equipment, we have to get some information to the Canadian people to reassure them that there is some focus, that there is some objective that can be carried out.

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A number of my constituents have contacted me with concerns. The official opposition, as is the case with all parties in the House, has supported what has gone on in trying to rectify the situation in Kosovo. Many of my constituents have tremendous concerns. I would like to read one of them:

I would like to express my opposition to Canada's continued involvement in Kosovo. Why are we there? I am very concerned with human suffering, but I am baffled that people don't remember the history of this place and the fact that there is a dismal human rights record that hasn't been addressed in the past.

We owe Canadians a real debate and an expression of their will through a vote in the House by their elected representatives. The government is dropping the ball. It is simply saying that we had a debate. However it has not been a meaningful debate. It has not been on specifics. Canadians have not been well served by the government. I urge the government to get specific, to get real, to have a real mandate from Canadian people, and to mean business in Kosovo.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my Reform Party colleague, just as I asked the Prime Minister this afternoon, to give, not one, not two, but three reasons why there should be a vote in this House if a decision is made to use ground forces in the conflict in Kosovo.

[English]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Madam Speaker, I could probably give 10 reasons but I will give the member three because I know my time is short.

This is a democracy ruled by the people. How are people supposed to express their rulership, their decision making, if their elected representatives have no voice, if their elected representatives cannot express their will? Democracy is what we are trying to supposedly preserve in these parts of the world, but we are not practising it here because there is no vote. One reason there should be a vote is to express our commitment in this country to true democratic principles. Let the people speak.

The second reason we should have a vote is if the government is to commit the resources, human lives and well-being of the country, it should have a mandate to do so and not just some executive decision by cabinet behind closed doors into its own members do not have any input, never mind the rest of the House. The mandate should say that the people, the legislators and the elected representatives are behind what the government will do. In that way we would know there is a commitment. We would be much stronger because we would be together. It would not be just a few people deciding what is going on and other people asking what is going on and why it is going on. We would have talked about it. We would know what the plan is and would have made a wilful decision to support it, which I think would be what all of us would desire to do.

• (2450)

The third reason we need a vote is that in order to have a vote we must have a real debate, not this mushy motion that I read, not these nice words but some real specifics. If we are voting we have to know what we are voting on. We cannot just take notice that things are happening. We have to ask what we are voting on, what we are trying to achieve and how we will achieve it.

These are the kinds of things I talked about in my speech to which I hope the hon. member was listening. We need to have a vote. It would make members demand the facts and address their minds to the facts. I think that would be healthy, proper and appropriate.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, actually I thought we were having a rather good debate. I have been here a very long time. Many members on all sides of the House have contributed very significantly and very well. I hope the government is taking note because many points of view have been presented.

I asked a question earlier of the hon. member's leader pertaining to the promise of a vote before Canada put ground forces into Kosovo, if Canada were to do so. I would like to observe one of the difficulties of promising a vote. When the time comes maybe there will be a vote. Indeed I rather hope there will be a vote. Between now and then, if we promise that putting in ground forces depends on a vote, every one of us would be subject in our constituency offices to pressure from the two sides in this conflict.

I remind the member that the sides in this conflict are extremely bitter. We are talking about conflict possibly leading to the killing with Canadian troops of people's relatives in Serbia or in Kosovo. The reason we cannot say that putting in ground forces depends on a vote is that we would be subject to not only intense pressure but possibly even intimidation in our ridings. It is very dangerous.

I would prefer that we set aside the question of a promise of a vote if we deployed ground forces. Let the government do what it must do when the time comes, should the time come, and I dearly hope the time never comes that we use ground troops.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy:** Madam Speaker, I must say that I truly respect the member. He is one of the thoughtful members of the House. I have a great respect for many of his interventions.

However, I certainly hope the member is not buying the nonsense that somehow we do not need a vote. That is absolute garbage. Whoever is feeding him that, because I am sure he would never have thought of it himself or held that position, I hope he will not buy it. I hope he is not just a backbencher who is being led around by the nose with these kinds of ridiculous arguments.

If we are not prepared to stand the heat we should get out of the kitchen. Just because a decision is difficult, because there are

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strong feelings on both sides, does not mean that we should abdicate our responsibility to make informed decisions based on the best information we have and on the best balance we can achieve. I ask the member to support that position with all his heart.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I must admit it gives me no great pleasure to stand at this hour to speak to very complex issues. These issues are as involved, as profound and as complex as faced by any parliamentarian. I might mention as well that I will be splitting my time.

Literally we are debating the issue of whether we should or should not go to war, whether we should or should not operate within the treaty confines of our NATO alliance, and whether we can or cannot contribute to a resolution of an ethnic conflict that has been going on for centuries.

• (2455 )

This area of ethnic and religious diversity has been a powder keg for years, going back to Suleman the Magnificent. Arguably it was the point of conflict that set off World War I. It was also a point of Nazi aggression in World War II when the Serbs actually fought the Nazis and the Albanians were the collaborators.

The participants in these ethnic conflicts have over time been either victims or aggressors. Yesterday's victims are today's aggressors and may well be tomorrow's victims. Indeed yesterday's aggressors are today's victims and may well be tomorrow's aggressors.

It is therefore in this historical context that NATO with the best of intentions has attempted to bring some ethnic peace and harmony to this arena. For the purposes of debate I am willing to concede that NATO and other interlocutors have made every attempt to bring the factions to the peace table. I would argue that there are no innocents in this debate and that all factions have in fact been guilty of ethnic cleansing, genocide and other horrible crimes against humanity.

NATO is not without its own difficulties as a prospective peacemaker. Its policies have not been clear and have not been consistent. For instance, in Croatia NATO was silent while the Serbs were ethnically cleansed from the greater Croatia area. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the Serbs were the protagonists in the hostilities and perpetrated some pretty awful things upon the other ethnic groups there.

This in turn led to some peacekeeping, but ultimately we bombed the Serbs to stay in a multi-ethnic state. In Kosovo we are bombing them to get out of a multi-ethnic state with the presumed aim of separating into an Albanian section and a Serbian section. This in and of itself has caused great difficulties for the population

and lays bare our naive assumption that bombing will somehow or another lead to a resolution.

Our Turkish partners have their own ethnic cleansing going on. We are in a moral quagmire because we bring to the table contradictory principles. We are humanitarian hawks. We believe that if we wage war for humanitarian purposes somehow or another peace will be restored. I would suggest it is extremely naive to think that bombs will bring peace.

We are into a moral quagmire from which we will not easily extract ourselves. We are into a legal quagmire from which we will not easily extract ourselves. We are into a military quagmire from which we will not easily extract ourselves. The history of this area is fraught with inter-ethnic conflict and yields no easy solutions.

Arguably our use of force to date has done nothing but create more inter-ethnic conflict, floods of refugees and oceans of blood. It has heightened world tensions in an area of the world where tensions are high at the best of times. Have we learned nothing from history? Is one world war not enough?

For instance, at this point in time Macedonia is undergoing some of its own ethnic tension as the floods of refugees have disturbed its balance. When Macedonia gets nervous so also does Greece. When Greece gets nervous so also does Turkey. Most particularly, when Serbia gets bombed the Russians feel particularly affronted.

Entering into peace brokering arrangements with the Russians is dubious at best and fraught with its own level of difficulties. One would like to assume that in dealing with a secure person such as President Yeltsin we would somehow or another achieve a resolution. However any casual reading of the situation yields the conclusion that President Yeltsin has a tenuous hold on power at best. Lined up behind him are a bunch of nut cases who would be more than happy to do sabre rattling of their own and touch off possibly a larger conflict.

At this point in time we have rained bombs down on Yugoslavia for 21 days. We have something in the order of 250,000 extra refugees, possibly as many as half a million. We have destabilized the area which is fragile at the best of times and brought into play a former superpower. Increasingly at this point the American generals have said that this was all reasonably predictable. If this was all reasonably predictable, then why in heaven's name did we get into it?

• (2500)

Another consequence of this conflict is the erosion of our commitment to the United Nations and the rule of law. Canada has been a booster of the United Nations and has committed itself to peacekeeping operations whenever asked. In addition, we have politicked long and hard to obtain a seat on the security council, advocated soft power, advocated human security and advocated a

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number of other initiatives that are consistent with our role as a middle power.

However, as soon as the conflict came along we abandoned our principal position with the United Nations, we did not secure a resolution from the security council and we abandoned any pretence of the rule of law. In the course of our proceeding in this fashion we have, for want of a better term, kissed away the rule of international law.

We cannot have it both ways. We cannot, for many purposes, seek the rule of international law, seek to create international institutions, seek to obtain peace and security throughout the world through the role of international law and then, when asked by big brother to participate in NATO bombings, run off and abandon years of work at the United Nations. There have already been a lot of victims in this war and the rule of law may be one of the most significant.

We are well aware that the United States does not care about the United Nations, nor does it think anything of it. In our haste to fulfil our obligations to NATO we have bought into the American view that the United Nations is an irritating irrelevancy and not worthy of dignified dialogue among nations.

The final point I wish to make is with respect to our military quagmire. It is very easy to get into war; it is a great deal more difficult to get out. This so-called exit strategy about which many people have spoken is not as much strategy as a point of desperate departure.

We do not have an exit strategy and, of course, Mr. Milosevic cannot be counted on to accommodate us. Therefore, we are in the unenviable position of having to ratchet up our commitment to such an extent that we will have to virtually pulverize the nation of Yugoslavia into submission and then impose a peace settlement upon the nation of Yugoslavia. It echoes again of World War I when we imposed a settlement on the German nation.

There may be military analysts out there who can count that cost, but I as a parliamentarian have no idea what that cost might be and I defy my hon. colleagues to suggest otherwise.

I am therefore left to speculate. If I speculate on the basis of history, I would note that the Serbian resistance fighters in the second world war under Marshal Tito kept a very trained, well-equipped and very committed German army, under the Nazis, pinned down for years.

I think we would be foolish in the extreme to think we may have better military toys and therefore our side will win. I need only point to Vietnam as an example, where the Americans had far superior technology but little people in pyjamas won that war with 65,000 American dead.

I was in Vietnam last year. It is a dinky little country. It reduced a super power like the United States to abject humiliation through

sheer force of will. Does anyone in the House or the government know that we are not just creating Europe's version of Vietnam?

We are entering into another nation's civil war which has been going on for centuries and from which we will not easily or gracefully extract ourselves. We are in a moral quagmire where there are no innocents. We are in a legal quagmire where the rule of law is a victim. We are in a military quagmire from which we cannot readily extract ourselves. This reflects very poorly on our values as a nation and compromises our standing among the nations.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as you can see, the Bloc Québécois is interested in these matters even at this late hour.

I would like to ask my colleague, who has a legal background and who, I believe, is well versed in criminal law, whether he believes a genocide is currently taking place in Kosovo or whether he believes that, for the moment, it is more a matter of ethnic cleansing.

● (2505)

Either way, under international law—because he referred to international law—does the international community not have an obligation to act to prevent genocide or ethnic cleansing?

[English]

**Mr. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and I congratulate him on his staying power at this late hour.

It is indeed a good question. It brings up some rather technical distinctions between what constitutes genocide and what constitutes ethnic cleansing. In simple terms, as I understand genocide, it is simply that you lock the people in and you kill them all. Ethnic cleansing is a more selective process. I must admit that if I were a victim, I would not appreciate the distinction. The distinction would probably be lost on me, as I would be dead either way.

As to the use of international institutions to bring some justice to this situation, it seems to me that we have caught ourselves in a bit of a contradictory position. For certain purposes we want to use international institutions, but we readily abandon international institutions for other purposes.

As I said in my speech, I think we are in something of a moral quagmire here. We are not being consistent with our overall commitment to international law.

We seem to want to have it both ways. We want to use international institutions for certain purposes, but for other purposes, for instance if we cannot get a resolution from the United Nations, we just walk away from it, abandon it. I think we will pay for that decision.

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[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp:** Madam Speaker, following up on what my colleague just said, I would like to ask him if he believes that under international law, NATO and its member countries are justified in intervening in Kosovo on humanitarian grounds.

[English]

**Mr. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member asks if there is under international law an exception for the invasion of a sovereign state. That is the essence of the question, as I would understand it.

The theory is that when a sovereign state commits either ethnic cleansing or genocide on a portion or all of its population, therefore, it is a humanitarian exception under international law which entitles us to intervene. I would be concerned that if we go down that path we would put into question the whole concept of sovereignty.

I would point to an article which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on the weekend in which Marcus Gee quotes Woodrow Wilson from 1918 concerning the principle of self-determination for a nation of peoples. Secretary of State Robert Lansing was aghast. The phrase, Lansing said in a private memo, was simply loaded with dynamite.

It is my view that international law, when it comes to intervention on humanitarian grounds, in a situation such as this, cries out for intervention. However, I am loath to engage that as a precedent and would want to very carefully nuance an answer to that, which I am not sure I am going to be able to do.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to speak of peace, not war. I would like to speak of hope, not despair. Indeed, despite the fact that we have talked only of war, of violence and of bombing, I think there is a glimmer of hope. I saw that glimmer, at least I believe it was a glimmer, on an airplane coming from Winnipeg on Friday when I was reading the Winnipeg *Free Press*.

• (2510)

There was a page on the war in Kosovo which had the usual headlines about bombing, troops moving, feeling the pain of the refugees and so forth. However, what was interesting about this page was the picture at the centre of it. The picture showed a soldier in full uniform bending over a baby. The cutline read: "An Israeli soldier covers a Kosovo refugee baby with an army blanket after it was born in a field hospital in Macedonia". It was an Israeli soldier.

The page also contained a sidebar story detailing which countries had decided to take Kosovo refugees. One of the countries that

had already taken refugees was Turkey. It had taken 7,000 refugees and, as I understand, intends to take more.

I submit that there is a glimmer of hope there. There is a connection between the mention of Turkey taking refugees and the Israeli soldier in the field in Macedonia. Those two countries were the scenes, and some might say the perpetrators, of two of the other great ethnic cleansings of the 20th century. Those are two out of three, the third being the holocaust.

In 1915, Turkey, the former Ottoman Empire, was at war with Russia and the other allied powers because it was on the side of Germany. In an effort to quell an uprising of Armenians who were siding with the Russians it banished some 700,000 Armenians. It transported them forcibly out of their homes, villages and cities and sent them to Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. This occurred at a time when there was no United Nations and when there was no infrastructure to look after such a massive movement of people, many of whom died.

In 1967 there was a six day war against Egypt and the other Arab powers in the region in which the Israelis were in a fight for their lives. After six days, when it was clear the Israelis were winning, they shelled Palestinian villages. I remember the consequence of that. I remember seeing the photographs in the newspapers and seeing the television clips, which were very similar to what we are seeing now. There were hordes of Palestinian refugees crossing bridges into Jordan.

Here is the hope. Remember that it was the former Ottoman Empire that actually perpetrated the expulsion of the Armenians, but Turkey and Israel have deeply drank of the bitterness of those expulsions. Neither country would ever say they were genocides. They would say it was necessary because they were in a state of war. But look at what has happened over the years, at how big a price Israel and Turkey have both paid in bitterness. The whole Middle East destabilized and Lebanon, one of the jewels of the Middle East, was destroyed because of the expulsion of the Palestinians and the conflict that resulted.

When I see that the Israelis are in Macedonia because of the refugees and when I see Turkey putting out a hand to Albanian refugees, I say that is a recognition of the deepness of the bitterness and of the destabilization it causes. It is a recognition and an atonement. It is a beginning where we can hope there will be some forgiveness on the part of the Palestinians of the Israelis, on the part of the Armenians of the Turks and the other way around. So there is hope. I hope that is something we can look forward to coming out of this.

What of Kosovo? What makes it different from what happened in the former Ottoman Empire and in Israel? What is different is how it parallels the other great ethnic cleansing, what happened in Nazi Germany to the Jews. In Germany, as in Kosovo, a government was expelling innocent civilians with force and terror. Germany was not at war with its Jewish population. Kosovo was

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not at war with the majority of the ethnic Albanians. We admit that it did have guerrilla problems, but it was not at war with one million Kosovars. Yet it was expelling them. The consequence has been the destabilization of the region.

• (2515)

When we talk about legalities we have to remember that countries and groups of countries have always reserved the right to take military action when there is a major destabilization of some region of interest that can lead to further wars. NATO was quite correct to enter into the Kosovo situation because already 400,000 ethnic Albanians had been expelled and there were another 500,000 to go. It had to act.

There certainly was the moral imperative in the humanitarian sense that the regime in Belgrade had no right to expel 90% of the population of Kosovo. Quite apart from that, NATO had to act because we could expect the same destabilization in Kosovo that we saw in the Middle East with the Palestinian refugees.

Once having acted, what is next? It has not unfolded as we would have hoped. Belgrade has not backed down. We have an impasse. The last thing in the world we want to do is to send in Canadian ground forces, or any ground forces for that matter. We must remember to look at the situation from the perspective of the Serbians. All through history it has been a solution of many governments including Britain and the United States. When they have a problem they have ethnically cleansed the region that is the problem. They do not see that they are doing anything that is particularly wrong.

I will give a few examples. In the Boer War the British were in South Africa and they could not quell the Boer farmers. What did they do? They rounded up all the civilians, all the wives and children, and put them into concentration camps. That is how the British solved the Boer War question.

There have been many examples in the past but they belong in the past. The problem right now is that what is wrong in Serbia is that it is repeating the past. We have to convince the people in Serbia that is not the way to do it. They can no longer use the tool of ethnic cleansing.

We must be very careful because this is not necessarily genocide. We know what genocide is. It is what occurred in the Holocaust when the state systematically murdered people. To expel people as is occurring in Kosovo, if we want to make a fine point of it, is exactly the same as what happened with the Ottoman Empire and exactly the same as what happened with the Israelis. They would rightly be offended if we suggested that was a case of genocide.

On the other hand atrocities do occur. Whenever there is a civil war, whenever there is an expulsion of people, atrocities do occur. We have to give the Serbs credit for wanting to preserve what they think is a legitimate ethnic identity based on territory. We are very

wrong if we do not give them some opportunities to find a way out, to join the rest of the world, and to appreciate that the tactics they are using are wrong.

If we send in ground troops, every Serb soldier will believe he is fighting for a just cause and will become a martyr. We will be making martyrs out of criminals. That would be the wrong tactic.

What is the solution? I do not know but I can suggest there is a key. I believe that key is Russia. We should be pleading with Russia to intervene to try to persuade the Serbs that there is a way out of the impasse, that there is dignity. I do not know what it is, but I know that we cannot just simply say that these are the five conditions and we will bomb the daylights out of them if they do not agree. I do not think that is the way to do it. I think that is the message coming from the leadership of NATO. I hope it is not the message that is being delivered by this country.

I think the bombing has to stop or at least pause. I support going into Kosovo. There is no doubt we had to do it for the reason of stability in the region and for humanitarian reasons. To keep on bombing is not the answer. Diplomacy is the answer. We should ask the country with the greatest experience in that region that is a great power to intervene on our behalf to try to find a solution, and I believe that is Russia.

• (2520)

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member. I was interested to hear what he had to say in the latter part of his speech about stopping the bombing and not requiring compliance with the full five points that have been outlined by NATO and, for that matter, by the UN secretary general.

It is very similar to the point of view put forward by my leader earlier today. We need to lower the threshold for getting back to the table and not eliminate conditions altogether. It is fair for NATO to say to President Milosevic that at the very least the killing in Kosovo, the expulsion of ethnic Albanians and the other things that are being done to ethnic Albanians have to stop in return for or simultaneously with a suspension in the bombing in order to create the kind of political space in which there might be a return to the table, hopefully with the help of Russia.

We take the view, as I think the hon. member does if I understood him correctly, that demanding the Serbian people and the Serbian government adhere to all those things which might well be the subject of negotiation before they go to the negotiation table, and demanding that they adhere to things which we already know are unacceptable, is a recipe for more and more bombing without result.

I welcome the hon. member's comments and invite him to elaborate further.



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**Mr. John Bryden:** Madam Speaker, this is an open debate. When I speak here, as I was asked by my Prime Minister who asked all of us to speak, I speak from my heart. I speak as I see the situation.

I hope that not only is my leadership listening but that the world is listening. We are one of the few open democracies. Each one of us can stand and not parrot the party line or beat our chests and say the government must be right because it is a war. It is not that at all. We have to speak and try to contribute to finding solutions in this debate.

In my opinion we should at least pause the bombing, give talk an opportunity to take hold again and give the Serbs dignity. We can never stop a war when we take away a people's dignity. This is why I am so afraid of NATO's propaganda.

Genocide and ethnic cleansing are very different. When we talk about genocide we talk about what Hitler did. When we talk about atrocities in Kosovo we do not know what has happened. It may be the normal atrocities—and they are horrible enough—that occur in civil wars. Genocide is something entirely different. We must be careful of the language and we must not be trapped by it. We must speak up in the House to make our government know that we appreciate these distinctions.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is true that there are distinctions between ethnic cleansing and genocide. However, they are fuzzy, and there are no indications that genocide could not occur in Kosovo.

Since the Kosovar population has been imprisoned and the borders recently closed, genocide could be occurring.

I would like to ask the hon. member two questions.

Did I understand correctly that he said that what happened to the Armenians early in this century was not genocide?

If he is so proud of democracy in this parliament, why would he not distance himself from a Prime Minister who did not clearly state whether we could vote on a motion about the use of ground forces, if this became necessary.

I did not find his argument convincing.

• (2525)

According to his argument, apparently it would be dangerous for the 301 members of this House to be subjected to pressure from the Serbs and the Kosovars. If the government makes that decision alone, does he not believe that only some 30 members of this House would be subjected to all that pressure?

In a genuine democracy, then, should parliament not vote on such an important question as sending troops into another country?

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden:** Madam Speaker, had it not been for the United Nations at the time of the expulsion of the Palestinians from the West Bank in Gaza during the six day war, they would have all died. The member should know that the Middle East does not have the nicest climate in the world. People die very quickly in deserts. People probably die quicker in deserts than traversing parts of Turkey in the direction of Syria and Iraq.

If we say that people died as part of the expulsion in Turkey as a result of genocide, we have to ascribe to the Israelis the intention of genocide. I am not prepared to do that because for centuries countries have believed that it was legally and ethically permissible to expel ethnic groups in times of war and that it was not genocide. Genocide was something such as in Rwanda when machetes were used or in Nazi Germany when ovens were used.

If the member makes a parallel with what happened in the former Ottoman Empire, he has to apply that parallel to Israel, to the Boar War and all kinds of other examples. From my knowledge I do not accept that what happened in the former Ottoman Empire was genocide.

The whole point of my speech was that we should get away from that type of language. We should admit that ethnic cleansing is the wrong thing to do under any circumstances as it creates bitterness and hate. We should be looking for forgiveness, atonement and forgetfulness in these instances so that we can live together in the future. That is the way to go.

I think I have answered the other question asked by the member.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that I will share my time with the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise to speak in this House today about the catastrophic war in Kosovo. Diplomacy did not alas have the hoped-for results, and it is with arms that the international community is attempting to convince Slobodan Milosevic to halt his aggression against the Kosovars. It is consensus within NATO that will replace the endorsement of the United Nations.

As the Bloc Québécois international co-operation critic, I am concerned above all about the fate of the refugees driven from Kosovo by this conflict.

The conflict we are seeing in Kosovo at the present time is the outcome of many years of instability in the Balkans, instigated largely by one man, or rather one dictator, Slobodan Milosevic. This 57 year old man has tried for an entire decade to dictate the course of history in the Balkans, always using the same methods, terror and blood, and always with the same goal, strengthening his own power.

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It was time the international community took steps to change this state of affairs. Obviously the Bloc Québécois would have preferred a peaceful diplomatic solution to the conflict over Kosovo, but unfortunately there is this man, Slobodan Milosevic, defending a greater Serbia at any cost.

The result has been war in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Each time it is the same Machiavellian logic. Igniting a crisis, proclaiming himself the nation's champion to reassert his authority and legitimacy over a powerless people already suffering from many years of bloody conflicts.

• (2530)

These people are now nothing but the playthings of a single man's ambition and, each time, the adventure is a real debacle of humanitarian catastrophes.

Let us pass in review the military exploits of this dictator, Milosevic. First, it is important to bear in mind that the population of Kosovo is 90% Albanian. In 1974 Albania was given independent status, but in 1989 Milosevic unilaterally withdrew by decree its status of independent territory. That was the spark that led to the Yugoslav explosion of the 1990s.

As part of Milosevic's harassment, the Albanian language was banned, and Albanian language schools, theatres and newspapers were closed down. In light of this new situation, the Kosovars held a referendum that allowed them to declare Kosovo's independence.

The Milosevic government reacted brutally to that resistance by sending troops into Kosovo. From then on, the Kosovar people were the victims of massacres, gang rapes, and the systematic destruction of villages. A number of NGOs estimated that over 250,000 Kosovars had been displaced and that at least 50,000 persons had fled to the mountains. I need not tell you that, from then on, the international community was faced with a humanitarian disaster.

Let us now look at the present situation. On March 11, 1999, before the air strikes had begun, Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, estimated that 400,000 persons had been forced to flee their homes since the conflict had begun in March 1998. Of that number, nearly 230,000 had been displaced within Kosovo.

On March 24, the day the air strikes began, there were a total of 450,000 Kosovar refugees, including 260,000 within Kosovo.

Today, according to estimates by the UN High Commission for Refugees, some 650,000 inhabitants out of a population of some 2 million have fled Kosovo. Furthermore, it is estimated that half the refugees are under 18 years of age.

Among the adult refugees, some 85% are women. There is also a great many elderly persons. As well, in today's newspapers, we read that the British authorities estimate the number of men Kosovar refugees who may have disappeared at 100,000.

Faced with such a disastrous picture, now is more than ever the time to think about these humanitarian crises. Why have we not learned from the past? In the present conflict, international diplomatic efforts broke down, let us remember, back in 1989.

What explanation is there for the fact that the international community, including Canada, did not take note of the Bosnian tragedy and not only the humanitarian but also the financial and political costs of failing to take strong action while there was still time?

It was a good long time ago that the Bloc Québécois first warned the Canadian government about the atrocities in Kosovo and the importance of considering air strikes and, if no other solution could be found, the sending of NATO ground troops in to put a stop to ethnic cleansing and prevent the genocide of the people of Kosovo.

I want to repeat that the Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of a diplomatic resolution to the current conflict, but one must be realistic when faced with the obstinacy of Slobodan Milosevic. It is probable that, if Canada and the international community had followed the advice of the Bloc Québécois, there would not now be 650,000 Kosovar refugees, to say nothing of massacred civilians, torture and the mass exile of whole villages.

It is high time that the international community gave serious thought to and registered, once and for all, all the errors that have been committed, and made sure they will not happen again.

This having been said, the fact remains that we are now facing an atrocious reality, that of a humanitarian crisis.

• (2535)

The refugee overflow into the republic of Macedonia and into Albania may well destabilize the governments of those countries. This means that direct, massive, unconditional assistance must be provided if we want to prevent the conflict from spilling over in the entire region. Appeals by these two countries must be taken seriously, and Canada has an obligation to respond to them.

In addition to these geographic and political contingencies, all western countries have an obligation to provide every assistance they can to the persons displaced by the conflict.

The assistance required is considerable, and will continue to be so for a long time. Canada must prepare to provide assistance and, starting now, must show its support for NGOs, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the Red Cross and other organizations.

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Canada must also consider the urgency of the situation on the ground, particularly in Albania and the republic of Macedonia, where the influx of Kosovar refugees and the resulting need for humanitarian assistance continue unabated every day.

I want to reiterate the question I asked here in this House during Oral Question Period this afternoon: Is the government prepared to reallocate the \$100 million set aside to take in Kosovar refugees here, to help the NGOs that are now looking after refugees over there? Unfortunately I did not obtain a response to my question this afternoon. The government must realize that every dollar spent on humanitarian assistance can save a life, or at least lessen the suffering of the Kosovar refugees. The need is very great indeed.

I would like to quote the words of Bajram Cena, the director of the hospital in Kukes, Albania, where every day thousands of refugees are pushing to get in:

It is like the end of the world—in the operating room, all that is available to doctors are scissors, thread for sutures and a few bottles of rubbing alcohol. The nurses are digging out shrapnel splinters without anaesthetic. On the other side of the corridor, blood soaked compresses are floating in the toilets—

Could this money not be put to use by this doctor for his hospital? When I say that the life and the most basic well-being of the refugees depends on this, it is nothing but the stark truth. What will the government do with the \$100 million? That money must be used immediately.

In conclusion, and for the benefit of listeners in Quebec and Canada, I would like to recall that it is vital to give generously to help Kosovar refugees. Those who would like to donate money, because money is what is most urgently needed, can do so via the Red Cross, among other agencies, at a toll free number that I will give right now: 1-800-418-1111.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on an excellent speech. I felt it came very much from her heart, but I have a question.

I alluded to the Palestinian situation in my remarks. What happened after the expulsion of the Palestinians was that they remained in refugee camps for decades. Indeed, they are still in refugee camps.

What does the hon. member think is a reasonable length of time to have the Kosovo Albanians in refugee camps? If there is a limit to that time, does she suggest some other solution other than refugee camps?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Monique Guay:** Mr. Speaker, for the moment all that can be done is to protect those refugees who are outside Kosovo. This

will take as long as it takes. What is important at the moment is for these people to have food, basic care, everything they need to survive.

It is up to developed countries to send them what they need, to send money and whatever is required to ensure their survival.

Has a time limit ever been put a war or a dispute between countries? Must a limit be set, whereby people can remain in one place for six months, and then will be sent elsewhere? These people do not want to leave their region, they want to stay there. Their culture is there. Their country is there. They are just waiting to be able to get back to it. Let us try to settle the situation as soon as possible, so that they can get back to Kosovo and finally find happiness in their country.

• (2540)

They are not going to find happiness by being taken to other countries continents away. I would not want to compare the present crisis with what is going on in Palestine. Every crisis has its own history. Every war, every movement has its own history, in its own time. They cannot be compared.

Canada and all of the developed countries have a duty to send aid to these people in Albania and Macedonia as promptly as possible, particularly since we know that those countries do not have the resources to be able to help them.

Let us do our duty, then, and let the government send the necessary funds and aid to these countries.

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, the member for Laurentides, if she were, for instance, a minister in a sovereign Quebec, what would be her priority right now, what would she do as minister for international cooperation given this crisis in Kosovo?

**Mrs. Monique Guay:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry. I am not the minister for international co-operation but I do have some ideas and I would act swiftly.

We already have some resources at our disposal. We have CIDA, which is active throughout the world. I would first use the resources we already have in these regions to provide whatever help is needed as quickly as possible.

I would not be afraid to ask for \$100 million. I think the minister is not being vocal enough to get the government to hand over the money needed to help the countries caught in this crisis.

I would exert incredible pressure on the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to get the funds needed and to help these

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people, I would try to avoid duplication and use existing resources in these regions to act more quickly.

That is what I would do.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak in this special debate.

I remind members that the motion provides:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and of the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo that leads to the safe return of the refugees.

The member for Laurentides described very clearly and succinctly the situation of the refugees and the international aid, which must come quickly to enable them to enjoy basic living conditions and, once the political and military crisis is over, to return to their country having suffered as little as possible in the situation.

The situation also raises certain questions. Was this type of intervention really necessary? Was NATO justified in intervening as it did and did it do it right?

I think the answer is in the speech by the member for Laurentides and in all the images we have seen of the refugees and the treatment given them by another government, which treated them like guinea pigs. It is as if they decided to tell these people they could not live where they wanted. Clearly, there is a major crisis.

Was the intervention by NATO the most appropriate and properly planned? Did it anticipate the reality as we have seen it with all these refugees fleeing Kosovo, pushed by the Serbs' action, which is in fact ethnic cleansing. I am not sure.

In terms of the end result, where are we today? We must look at this in three ways, that is in military, humanitarian and diplomatic terms.

● (2545)

There must be an assessment of the bombing strategy. The ministers responsible in all NATO countries are currently conducting such an assessment and they are trying to see whether other measures are in order, including whether ground troops should be sent in.

Given the planning difficulties, we have many reservations and we want to make sure that, when the decision is made, it will be made with full knowledge of the facts.

This is not an issue regarding which we must wait until we have absolutely all the relevant information, since it might then be too

late and since that information might no longer be useful. However, all the necessary preparations must be made, and the parliaments concerned must be provided with appropriate information, because several of them will send troops to take part in such operations.

It is important for us, as elected officials, to be allowed to vote on this issue. As all the opposition parties have asked today, there should be a vote on the issue, so that parliament can indicate its intention with a massive vote. In the case before us, it would strengthen the position of the Government of Canada. I hope that the Prime Minister will continue to ponder the issue and will make a positive decision.

Some humanitarian measures must also be taken. The hon. member for Laurentides clearly showed the urgent need to act and the importance of taking the necessary steps so that such action can take place quickly.

We are going to be judged partly on this aspect by the international community. So far, our image has not necessarily been a positive one, given the air strikes and their impact. We must, from a humanitarian point of view, do our utmost to show that this is not an act of vengeance, but an act to ensure respect of international rights and of the rights of citizens all over the world. What is needed in a few years is for the Balkans to be fully integrated into a Europe where there is genuine respect for human rights, and for the actions taken in 1999 to have improved the atmosphere and produced acceptable solutions.

On the diplomatic level, I feel that Canada did not play its role fully. The Government of Canada, through the UN, could have done much more. Talks with the Russians or the Chinese, who have a veto, should be continued. If these vetos are ultimately exercised, we would know by whom. This would lead us also to take a much closer look at all the weaknesses of the United Nations.

The fact that NATO has now stepped in without the agreement of the UN—which I think would have been preferable—is a result of the imperfections in the UN system. What would prevent a reform at the present time? The UN system originally made sense, but evolved over several decades as the international situation changed. Should something not be learned from all this and the UN reformed so that this kind of veto does not get in the way of enforcing respect for human rights internationally in future?

There are lessons to be learned and a public debate is in order. Whether during the Suez crisis or at other times in the last 30 or 40 years, the Government of Canada has taken some interesting initiatives internationally. In this particular case, Canada's diplomatic role was very limited compared to the role it could have played, not because we are a major world power but because Canada, through its contacts, can intervene usefully with the Russians, for instance, who will play a very important role in the final, inevitably political, solution, and Russia, in turn, can intervene with Yugoslavia.

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All this bears thinking about. When the Prime Minister of Canada went to Mexico, he was criticized by Mexico's head of state for Canada's position.

• (2550)

He explained his position but he may also have to help all those countries to have a better knowledge of the issue, a better knowledge of the situation.

If we had an appropriate system in the United Nations, the general assembly could probably, through a strong enough vote, overturn certain vetoes. It might be a way to achieve results and prevent a military organisation like NATO from taking political stands.

All this brings us back to the fact that we do not have a perfect system. There are still flaws that have to be remedied. For the time being, people are going through an unacceptable situation.

The lesson we should learn from the 20th century is that signs of ethnic cleansing, as we are now seeing, carry a possibility of genocide. No one can say that we did not act because we did not know and that we did not have enough information to take action.

We do have enough information. We know the terrible situation we are facing. NATO's action, which may seem to have been inadequately planned according to comments heard this week, must send a clear message that will force Yugoslavia to take heed and allow us to reach a political solution to the present situation.

Let us not forget that the important images are not those of planes leaving aircraft carriers or military bases in Italy. The important images are those showing old people, women, all those displaced persons who are going through a difficult situation, in humanitarian terms.

The Kosovars we saw on television are not leaders in their communities. We could see very well that they were simple people like those in our own communities. Those people were all of a sudden deprived of their ordinary way of life, in a violent and unacceptable way.

For those reasons, we must absolutely take clear action. It is important that the House be allowed to vote to send a clear message to the international community.

[*English*]

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague on the sincerity of his speech, but there are some difficulties I am having trouble understanding. I have several questions.

I do not think there is any difference between that side of the House and our side of the House with respect to what should be done as we deal with the refugee crisis and the humanitarian considerations in the terrible conflict going on in the Balkans.

My colleague made several statements with respect to the military aspects. One dealt with the imperfections of NATO and that the Government of Canada could do something else other than what is being done. The member made some comments about the United Nations.

What does the member think should happen when 19 countries in NATO are all united, and have been united in the last three weeks and three or four days with respect to the military action taken in trying to bring this terrible person under some kind of control? What does the member think the United Nations should be doing? We are all agreed, those of us in the free world and NATO, and the secretary general recently stated that the United Nations is doing all it can to find diplomatic efforts to solve this problem.

The member commented with respect to what our peacekeeping forces did in the past, starting with the Pearson peacekeeping movement that Canada adopted and in which Canada has been a world leader.

• (2555)

To stand in this House and criticize our peacekeeping movement which has been the honour of Canada for the past 45 years, to criticize what we are doing as one of the 19 countries of NATO and to criticize what we are doing as a very important member of the United Nations does not stand in good stead for the unity this House should be showing in supporting our efforts on the military side and what we are attempting to do to satisfy the humanitarian concerns in which we are all interested.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, considering the present situation, I do not think that it would be rude to point out that world diplomacy did not play its role very well. Had it fully played its role and been fully effective, we could have avoided military intervention.

It would have been better to go about things differently. For me, diplomacy is always the first choice. When we can solve a problem without resorting to arms, I think that is the course we must take.

In this case, NATO would have a much stronger position, morally, if it had been what I would call the military arm of the UN. That would have been a lot more effective, and it would be a lot easier to build a consensus among countries outside of NATO.

Earlier, I gave the example of Mexico. Had there been a UN resolution justifying a military strike based on the need to protect human rights in the Balkans, I think our position would have been much stronger.

My intention was not to lash out against Canada's actions on various issues over recent years. I do think that in the situation at hand, Canada could have done more than just go along with the other NATO players. It could have taken up a more dynamic, aggressive and positive role to try to bring about a broad international consensus, and thus put pressure on UN members who have a

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veto, like Russia and China, and find some other solution or approach. In the future, that is what we should do in other such instances.

Who can say that, a couple of months from now, we will not need a special force to defend a protectorate in Kosovo. To have a sufficient moral authority, will this special force not need a mandate from the UN?

After the NATO bombardments, soldiers involved in those NATO strikes may not be the best choice to act as a buffer between these two communities. We may need a different kind of intervention. This is what Canada should be concerned with, and it should be more active, on the diplomatic front.

[*English*]

**Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to split my time with the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant.

In times of peace and prosperity, countries and individuals alike follow higher standards because they are not being forced into a situation in which they must do something they do not want to do. But war is a stern teacher. In depriving them of the power of easily satisfying their daily wants, it brings most people's minds down to the level of their actual circumstances. The circumstance that is uppermost in the minds of people today is the worsening human crisis in Kosovo.

Our thoughts rightly turn to a range of important questions. What is the current situation in and around Kosovo? What is the status of NATO's efforts to reduce Slobodan Milosevic's ability to further harm Kosovo's inhabitants? What does this conflict mean for us as Canadians and for Canada as a member of the north Atlantic alliance? What is the nature of our interests and obligations, be they strategic, political or moral?

As we debate these and other issues today, it is clear to me that our perspectives on some of these questions and perhaps those that come closest to home are largely influenced by our respective views on Canada's traditions. I join this debate to say a number of things, but first and foremost to speak my mind on what I believe has developed in the course of this century into a proud Canadian tradition of helping others.

• (2600)

Canadians have shown a very real appreciation for the significance of events occurring far from home, and this awareness has had an important influence on the government's decision making.

When they see that the international situation demands it, Canadians have supported sending the Canadian forces into harm's way in order to make a tangible contribution to the cause of

international peace and security. This willingness to involve ourselves in the world has become traditional for us and it is a tradition that we all can be proud of. It is a tradition rooted in culture and commitment. It is an expression of our values and interests abroad.

Canada has long-standing links to the broader international community through culture, economy and family. As a major trading nation, we thrive in a stable and international system and we are directly affected by instability elsewhere. Our security depends on global peace and stability, and we protect our interests by working with others.

That is why we are founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations, and why we have committed ourselves to a host of other international institutions. It is why we went to Europe to fight for peace in 1914 and returned to do so again in 1939. After the second world war we fought for those same ideals in Korea.

Since then, we have become the world's pre-eminent peacemaker; well intentioned, well equipped and well trained.

Over the last 50 years more than 100,000 Canadian men and women have served in peacekeeping missions around the world. When the Nobel prize was awarded to the United Nations for peacekeeping operations, Canada was singled out for its contributions and honoured by the international community.

The concept of peacekeeping, which Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson gave the world over 40 years ago, was a simple yet powerful idea. And, as history shows, this idea caught on.

Prime Minister Pearson's perspective on international security also provided two of the fundamental pillars of our foreign and defence policies. The first is that the promotion of international peace and stability is of paramount importance to Canada. The second is that promotion of this stability is best undertaken collectively because it clearly demonstrates the will of the international community.

For these reasons Canada may be required from time to time to commit our military resources to protect deeply held Canadian interests and values.

We must also remember that Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's concept of peacemaking was not limited to providing troops when fighting had stopped. He clearly understood that military forces sometimes had to be employed not merely to monitor peace but to create the conditions in which it can be established.

In 1997, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan echoed Lester Pearson's vision, stating that "you can do a lot more with diplomacy when it is backed up with firmness and force".

Our country has a well deserved reputation as a peacekeeper, but that reputation and the events that created it are also elements of a

wider tradition. That tradition is one of international engagement on a range of issues, peace and security being among them. To understand that tradition we must not forget that we have never and will never shy away from stronger means if that is what the pursuit of peace requires.

Canada of course always prefers a diplomatic solution. Our tradition has always been to appeal to the powers of reason and try to achieve peace without the use or even the threat of force.

Sometimes, however, diplomatic action is not enough. Diplomatic efforts sometimes fail to produce the desired result and that leaves governments with a choice. They have the option of walking away, but where the interests are real, the international community is left with little choice but to take action against those who refuse to adhere to international standards of conduct. This is a reality of international relations.

• (2605)

This decade alone has given us examples of such circumstances. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, the international community had to employ its military resources. In Bosnia, NATO had to use selective force to bring about the conditions for peace and stability. On both occasions Canada was there with our allies.

Last year we returned to the gulf to pressure Iraq to comply with the United Nations weapons inspections. This year we returned to the Balkans to ease the humanitarian suffering in Kosovo. Over the years, thousands of Canadian forces personnel have made Canada's presence felt.

In my riding we are privileged to have one of the largest military bases in Canada, CFB Petawawa. I am proud to say that the troops of Base Petawawa have discharged their duty with diligence, dedication and devotion to securing peace throughout the world. Our present involvement in NATO operations is only the most recent form of our long-standing commitment to security.

There are those who will argue that the use of force against Milosevic's efforts in Kosovo is not in line with multilateralism or with Canada's traditions. I believe these people are wrong.

In conclusion, I would like to paraphrase John Donne. No person is an island entire of itself. Every person is a part of the whole. Any person's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. Therefore, never ask for whom the bell tolls; the bell tolls for thee.

Right now the bell is tolling loud and clear that Canada must defend the defenceless of the world, the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Kosovo who have fled from the destruction of their homes and the murder and rape of their relatives. We cannot and will not stand for this kind of evil ethnic cleansing, this genocide, this destruction of humanity, because when the oppressed of the world call, Canada answers the bell.

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I am so proud that ordinary Canadians from such places as Arnprior, Barry's Bay, Calabogie, Douglas, Eganville, Renfrew, Petawawa, Pembroke, Deep River, Stonecliffe, Deux-Rivières and thousands and thousands in my great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke are committed to helping the refugees and committed to Canada's intervention in the Kosovo crisis.

When words and hope cannot protect the innocent, Canada cannot stand idly by. We must move forward with resolute resolve to end Milosevic's brutal campaign so that one day the bell will toll no longer, so that one day all mankind will live in peace, security and prosperity.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, because it is important for us to think things over together tonight—it is 2.10 a.m.

I listened to my colleague's impassioned speech about how we got to this stage. But how is it that we are here tonight wondering whether or not we should send in ground troops?

When the air strikes were decided on, there had to be a plan. I suppose it was thought it would take 5 to 10 days to settle matters. But it is taking a lot longer and so we are gathered here tonight. Some of our young soldiers, and soldiers from other countries, may have to die—this has to be pointed out—before this conflict is over.

There is a phrase some people no longer want to hear. I like to quote it now and then. It is not something I coined. It goes like this "Peace on earth to men of good will" .

How is it that on the eve of the year 2000 we still believe we should forge ahead, even though there may be a lot of bloodshed.

• (2610)

As a whole our soldiers are young and generous, and they are ready. I have trouble understanding how we got to this stage, virtually unanimously. Everybody agreed this had to be done.

Is there any good reason for asking our soldiers to put their lives on the line, so to speak? I would like the member to give me a few good reasons why we should send in ground troops.

**Mr. Hec Clouthier:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right, tonight's debate is a historic one, but there is a reason we are intervening in Kosovo.

[English]

The member opposite seems to be troubled by the fact that Canadians are risking their lives to fight for the peace and freedom of others. This is exactly what former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson was talking about in his peacemaking efforts.

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It is not our desire to risk the lives of our young soldiers, be they from Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia or any place around the world. However, on occasion situations determine that we cannot turn a blind eye. We must act. In this situation, we know there are hundreds of thousands of people dying. I find it unfathomable that the member opposite does not realize this. If it were the member's family, his brother, sister, mother or father, who were being slaughtered, would he not want someone to intervene?

I find it almost impossible to believe that the member opposite would not be rallying behind the Canadian troops saying "Canada you are doing the right thing".

I hope he and his party are not saying that Canada should not be there. I firmly believe we should be. We cannot turn our backs on these people. We cannot turn our backs on the world community when it calls for help. It is an atrocity for him to even intimate that. I hope he is not saying that, but that is what I gathered from his comments.

If we are playing mere politics that is wrong. I firmly believe that our young troops, be they from Quebec, Ontario or from CFB Petawawa in my great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, want to be there to protect peace and freedom throughout the world.

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and mixed feelings that I rise today to speak on this very important issue, the issue of the Canadian Armed Forces going overseas to help protect freedom and democracy.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who on a daily basis serve and represent their country in many theatres overseas, not only in the area of fighting on behalf of their country, but particularly in the area of peacekeeping in many troubled spots around the globe.

I also want to thank and praise the Canadian fighter pilots who are now overseas taking action on behalf of their country. I want to praise their families and loved ones who are sitting at home wondering exactly what is happening to their loved ones. I know that times are difficult for these families. I want them to know that Canadians all across this country thank them. I know Canadians would agree with me to pray for their loved ones.

• (2615 )

How did we get into this crisis? Mr. Milosevic's intransigence, his conduct in this current crisis in Kosovo, his support of the Yugoslav army in going into the area and raping, pillaging, and removing these poor people out of their homes and their country was something Canada needed to respond to.

Prior to Milosevic's rise to power, Kosovo was made up mostly of ethnic Albanians and had constitutional authority within the country of Yugoslavia. This right was stripped away from these people by Mr. Milosevic in 1989. Since then his security forces and his police have mounted a campaign in which innocent men, women and children have suffered.

Canada has had a long history in this region. It has participated in the region since 1991. It was part of the European Community's monitoring mission from 1992 to 1995.

Diplomatic solutions are preferable. In March 1998 the United Nations passed a resolution which called on parties to this conflict to reach a peace settlement. This was followed by another resolution which demanded both sides to end their hostilities and come to a peaceful agreement.

In October 1998 when faced by the threat of NATO air power, the Milosevic government agreed to a ceasefire. It agreed to an observer mission to oversee the ceasefire and also agreed to sit down and have talks on the issue. Over the next five months, Yugoslav forces violated this ceasefire. They took actions against the Kosovo Liberation Army and carried out a violent campaign and also carried out a violent campaign against the citizens. Canada and the international community could not stand by and see these people suffer.

An interim agreement was agreed to in Rambouillet, France. That agreement was signed by only one party. Unfortunately the Serbian delegation refused to sign. Again the Americans, through Richard Holbrooke, tried to get an agreement and tried to get the Milosevic government to see reason in its actions. Those talks failed and we are now in this situation.

The United Nations would have been the preferable way to resolve this issue. However, the United Nations Security Council could not come up with an agreement because two countries refused to agree for various reasons.

I was encouraged when United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan called on Milosevic and the Yugoslav Serb authorities to end immediately the campaign of intimidation and expulsion. He called on them to cease all activities of military and paramilitary forces in Kosovo, to accept unconditionally the return of refugees, to accept the deployment of an international military force, and to permit the international community to verify this. The NATO objectives in Kosovo are essentially the same requests by Secretary General Kofi Annan.

• (2620 )

Canada's preference and I am sure the preference of all Canadians would have been a negotiated settlement. I speak now on behalf of my constituents in Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant whom I have talked to not only during the last two weeks over the Easter break but before that. Most of them have said to me that they



would have preferred a negotiated settlement. They would have preferred the United Nations system to work.

I can speak for the overwhelming majority of them when I say that these constituents of mine support the position of the Government of Canada on this. They support the fact that the Government of Canada is involved not only on the military side but particularly on the humanitarian side, on the side of trying to help the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons in the region. We have seen on TV the signs of women and children coming out of the area.

It is important also to thank Canadians for their humanitarian efforts in this area. Many Canadians through their church groups and their community organizations have offered support for people in this area. About 800,000 or a million displaced people need our help. I thank Canadians in all parts of the country for coming forward with that help.

I thank the members of the Canadian armed forces who are now in the region, away from their families and loved ones, representing our country. I thank them for their efforts and assure them of the Government of Canada's continued support to help them in their efforts.

I call on the Milosevic government to listen to reason, to look at the negotiated settlement of Rambouillet and to stop the hostilities in that area.

The Government of Canada is on the right track. I believe that Canadians support us in this. It is something I am sure no government would ever want to do, but it is something that I can say on behalf of my constituents that we support.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things the hon. member said which is worth exploring is one of the things that bothers me, which is the analysis that has attended our getting into this situation. The member referred to it when he talked about the fact that the Milosevic government did not sign the Rambouillet agreement but that the KLA, the Kosovo Liberation Army did.

It seems to me that we can make too much of this. Not so much that Milosevic did not sign it. I think that is obviously something that should be taken into consideration, although there is a considerable degree of analysis which suggests that the Rambouillet agreement was designed in such a way as to make it impossible for Mr. Milosevic to sign it. But we can also overemphasize, it seems to me, the fact that the KLA did sign it, because the KLA signed it in the full knowledge that the Serbian government would not sign it. There was no price to pay for signing this agreement.

I think it is a mistake to laud the KLA for signing this peace agreement, not that I am suggesting the member did it but I have heard others do it. The KLA knew full well the other party to the talks would not sign. By signing it in the full knowledge that the

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others would not sign it, in effect they conscripted NATO as their air force in this conflict between themselves and the Serbian government.

I suggest to the member not by way of argument that this is one of the things that bothers me about the analysis that at one point or another we have all accepted. I am not trying to single out the member, or his party for that matter, because this was a decision that was made with a certain degree of unanimity here in parliament.

• (2625 )

One of the elements that bothers me in the analysis we were all informed by is the overemphasis of the fact that the KLA had signed the Rambouillet agreement when the Serbs had not. In fact I have been told there was an earlier agreement which the Serbs signed and the KLA did not. It is a bit more murky than we we have made out collectively.

**Mr. Bob Speller:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Most international observers and countries around the world when they look at that agreement, the situation and the history of the area, would agree it was a reasonable agreement. It was not a situation in which somehow the world was taking this area out of Yugoslavia. It was giving the people the same authority they had had before 1989 when the Milosevic government essentially took it away from them.

The purpose of the agreement was to give the people in that area the ability to have self-government, to govern themselves, to work in the area in such a way that they could fend for their families and have some sort of democracy, the ability to have a government to speak on their behalf. It was not a situation in which we were saying that we were going to rip this area out of Yugoslavia. The hon. member would agree that most observers feel it was a reasonable agreement.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will ask the same question I put earlier to his colleague, who completely ignored it because he did not understand it, I believe.

How is it that all the diplomatic efforts that were made failed? How did we reach this dead end and why is there such urgency now? What else could have been done on the diplomatic front? Did Canada do all it could in this respect? What was missing?

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Speller:** Mr. Speaker, I want to praise the work of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, the minister responsible for humanitarian relief and the Prime Minister for the work they have done in this area. Knowing the Prime

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Minister and how he takes his job seriously, it must be difficult for him to be sitting at the top and making decisions such as this. It is something he has taken seriously. I commend the Prime Minister and give him our blessings because I know this has to be a difficult time for him.

The hon. member's question is very difficult to answer. Nobody knows. We try as much as we can to come up with a solution. The United Nations is working on a solution. Many countries in the region have tried to come up with a solution.

As I said in answer to the previous question, most would agree that the Rambouillet agreement seemed to be a reasonable compromise. Why the United Nations Security Council, and why it could not work in this situation needs to be seriously looked at. I wish it could have worked and I am sure most Canadians wish it could have worked, but we could not stand by as a government and see the suffering going on in that region without taking action. I want to praise the Prime Minister for taking that action.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

• (2630)

The situation in which we find ourselves in Yugoslavia today with respect to Kosovo is a perfect example in my mind of what was meant when someone said that the road to hell was paved with good intentions.

We had a situation developing in Kosovo which was reminiscent of things that had happened previously in Bosnia. Europe, North America and the world in general felt guilty about not doing enough about that situation in time. When we saw an analogous but not a perfectly analogous situation developing in Kosovo, there was an appropriate sense of moral urgency that we not allow a similar situation to occur. We had this sense that something had to be done, but what was to be done?

In spite of all that we know from history about the ineffectiveness of bombing and about the counterproductive effect that bombing often has on a population, we nevertheless opted as a parliament and as a country to approve air strikes by NATO. We did that with the understanding that three conditions applied at the time.

The first condition was that it would be short in duration, that it would only be for two or three days. This is the kind of assurances that were given publicly and were given privately.

It was also agreed to on the condition that it would be effective in bringing Milosevic back to the table. That is why it would only take

two or three days. The argument was that Milosevic only needed this almost therapeutic bombing to provide him with an opportunity to come back to the table.

We were told that this would be effective in protecting ethnic Albanians, that it would bring an end to the atrocities being perpetrated against the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo.

It failed on all three counts. It has not been short. We are almost at the end of the third week of bombing, and the bombing has not been as selective and as smart as we would have liked. That is another thing we were promised. We see almost every day now mistakes being made, trains being bombed, car plants being bombed. It has not been effective in bringing Milosevic back to the table. It has not been effective in protecting ethnic Albanians. Certainly no one would want to argue that. The situation has become arguably worse since the bombing started.

Having regard to the debate about ground troops, I would certainly be sceptical if the same people, the same analysts, the same brain trust that gave me these assurances three weeks ago, were then to come back to the House and say that they would like us to make a decision in favour of ground troops in Kosovo. Frankly their record in terms of analysis and in terms of consequences is not a good one. It seems to me that there is a rational argument for at least taking stock of the current situation, taking stock of our analysis and what might have been wrong with it, and taking stock of where we go from here.

Very quickly in terms of the analysis, we need to entertain the notion that we underestimated the depth of Serbian feeling about Kosovo and the depth of the symbolism involved in Kosovo with respect to the Serbian collective psyche, something that transcends Mr. Milosevic and something that we may well have misunderstood and underestimated in our initial analysis.

We need to entertain the notion that we have not fully understood the implications of the Rambouillet agreement in so far as it pertains to how the Serbians understood that agreement. Many of the conditions in Rambouillet may have been conditions that were simply never on with respect to how the Serbians saw the situation.

I am thinking in particular of what I understand to have been a late add on to Rambouillet after the Russians signed off in an earlier stage of the negotiations which stipulated that it would be NATO troops in Serbia that would supervise the Rambouillet agreement. We need to look at that and ask ourselves some difficult questions about it.

• (2635)

As I said earlier, we need to ask ourselves whether or not we are exaggerating the difference between the KLA and the Serbians in

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terms of who signed the agreement and who did not when we know that the KLA only signed after it knew the Serbians would not sign. We know that there was an earlier agreement in which the Serbs signed and the KLA did not.

I raise these things in terms of thinking that we have to be self-critical. We have to be reflective on whether the analysis that caused us to embark on this was adequate. Having done these things with an inadequate analysis but nevertheless for the very best of reasons, which was to stop the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Kosovo, we need to take stock of what to do now.

My leader in the House of Commons and the critic for the NDP, the member for Burnaby—Douglas, suggested that one thing we could do would be to lower the threshold which is now being imposed upon Milosevic for coming back to the table.

We know what NATO is saying and what the UN secretary general is saying, that Milosevic has to meet five different conditions. We know those conditions are unacceptable, so why are we setting the bar so high that we know we are literally making ourselves captive to a bombing strategy that goes on and on? Why not make the only condition that the killing stop, that the atrocities stop and that the expulsion of Albanian Kosovars stop?

We suggest that be the condition on which NATO and Milosevic go back to the table with the bombing and killing stopping. We hope it would create an opportunity in which diplomatic efforts can succeed. If it does not then we have to consider once again what the military strategy may be. We simply do not see the wisdom of adhering to a policy which says basically that we have set conditions that we know are unacceptable and if they continue to not accept them we will bomb Yugoslavia forever and a day until such time as it accepts the unacceptable. We find this to be a dubious strategy.

Another thing we have said, which is an important point to make, is that we have been very concerned, particularly with the way the Minister of National Defence has talked, about it having to be NATO troops that are there to supervise whatever settlement is arrived at. We need to talk more about the international community and the UN, but I am also concerned that what is happening in the House and in the debate generally about Kosovo is that the international community and NATO are being spoken of interchangeably. This raises concerns for us because whatever NATO is, it is not the international community. It should not pretend to speak for the international community.

That raises concerns about what is going on inside the collective mindset of NATO. I was at the last two NATO parliamentary meetings in Barcelona in the spring of last year and in Edinburgh in the fall of last year. One thing that concerned me then, and I wrote about it at that time, was that I could see NATO making a bid in its own mind to replace the UN as the policeman of the world, so to speak.

We see here a manifestation of that. It is a manifestation we have supported, only to the extent that we felt the situation was urgent, that something needed to be done, and that NATO was the only organization with the capacity to do anything about it at the moment. We do not do it with any support whatsoever for what may be in the minds of some NATO planners or subliminally in the collective consciousness of NATO, which is that it is in fact to replace the UN as the enforcer of international law. That would ultimately be very hypocritical and could well be interpreted as fitting into a larger American plan to degrade the status of the United Nations, which they have systematically done by not paying their dues, and by generally calling the reality and credibility of the United Nations into disrepute.

There are a lot of things here that ought to be of concern to Canadians while at the same time we all join together in knowing why we made the decision we did.

• (2640)

We also need to be open to changing our minds, to responding to the newness of the situation or to failure, to the fact that what we are now doing does not appear to be working. I would urge that open-mindedness upon the government and ask it not to be too NATO fixated and always be looking for the solution. Of course, as we have said over and over again, the solution will involve bringing the Russians into the loop and into the process.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recommend to the hon. member a number of books both on Kosovo and Bosnia written by Noel Malcolm. I say that because perhaps we are not as up on our history as we should be.

I have concerns about the hon. member's comments. I do not believe he appreciates or gives credit for what Canada and NATO have done. Somebody had to step in. We know what happened in the first world war when the League of Nations was not in a position to step in. A few countries went forth. Canada was one of them.

I do not know if there is ever a perfect solution, but I know that when China does not agree to the renewal of peacekeepers in Macedonia we have a situation where NATO is unable to act.

We should have some appreciation for what Canada and NATO have done. It would be nice if we would have some criticism of Milosevic's regime. I get the sense that there is more criticism coming from that side of the House directed at NATO and directed at our efforts than at what is happening on the ground in the former Yugoslavia.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of cheap, jingoist, patriotic crap that I just do not have any tolerance for.

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I do not think we need to debate among ourselves about whether or not we are on the side of Mr. Milosevic. We are all very much against Mr. Milosevic and what he is doing. I thought we lived in a democracy and we did not check our brains in at the door when we walked into the chamber of the House of Commons. I thought we could offer some intelligent criticism of the position that we collectively and unanimously took and reflect on it without having this kind of question put to me.

The hon. member says we ought to know our history. He talks about the League of Nations not being able to act and that was why we had the first world war. The League of Nations was not created until after the first world war. The hon. member should get it straight. He should not lecture me on history if he does not even remember when the League of Nations was created. Then he talked about the China veto—

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will not have the hon. member misrepresent the League of Nations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is not a point of order. That is debate.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I have experienced this hon. member before and his inaccuracies far outnumber anything useful that he might ever have to say.

He also talked about the China veto keeping NATO from acting. It was the China veto that kept the UN from acting. That is a problem and it is something that we pointed to in our speeches today. We have a problem at the United Nations.

NATO is made up of 19 countries, some of them the most powerful countries in the world. Instead of using the incapacity of the UN as a reason for expanding its own role in the world, one of the things NATO could have been doing for a long time is playing a role at the UN in reforming the UN so that the UN itself could act. But one of the major leaders in NATO, the United States, has done exactly the opposite. Instead of saying that it has a problem in the United Nations with the vetoes on the security council, and the difficulty it has in acting, so let us reform the UN, the U.S. has basically walked away from the UN and tried to create its own institution for the enforcement of international law. In this case that appears to have become NATO. That is one of the concerns we have. I think it is a valid concern and it is a concern expressed by a lot of people who have a great deal of respect for international law. They see the dangerous precedent that has been set or that could be set.

• (2645)

The action by NATO could go two ways. It could be a breakthrough by which we set a precedent, albeit this time with the wrong institution, NATO, whereby we declare that human rights violations happening within sovereign nations are no longer be-

yond the reach of the international community, or it could be a breakaway on the part of NATO by which it seeks to establish itself as the policeman of the world. That would be a mistake and would set precedents that would be used by other super powers that we would not find very attractive.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg—Transcona for sharing his time with me.

I would like to start by pointing out that history has shown us one thing that we should all be conscious of today, which is that federations are the hardest form of government in the world to try to keep together and to keep stable. By their very nature they are thrown together by a disparate bunch of states or provinces, often with very different and competing interests and points of view. They are usually thrown together voluntarily to form federations.

However, what many people do not realize is that there are less than 20 federations in the world. In fact there are far less. India would probably be the largest. The United States would be the wealthiest and the most powerful. But even the United States only lasted 75 years before blowing itself up into a massive civil war. We can see the tensions that exist within federal states.

Currently, of those federal states that exist in the world, three of them are in the process of self-demolition. The U.S.S.R. is all but gone from its former incarnation. The former Yugoslavia has gone in recent years. The third is Canada, which is at risk of being split apart by disparate forces. There is a western separatist party pulling it in one direction and an eastern French separatist party pulling it in another.

As we review the turmoil in Kosovo it is good for us to pause to reflect on some of the lessons that can be learned: how fragile the institution of any federal state is; the collective will that it takes to hold it together, in spite of all the competing forces; and how violent and destructive it can be to all concerned if we weaken in our collective will to hold it together. It can shatter, dissolve or blow up like we are seeing in the current situation.

For some time now Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has pursued with vengeance his vision of a greater Serbia. He has ruthlessly suppressed the rights of the other former states within Yugoslavia. After Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia gained their independence, only Montenegro and Serbia remained, with Kosovo, a province within Serbia.

Kosovo's population is 90% ethnic Albanian, as we have been reminded by other speakers. In 1989 Milosevic ended their autonomy and tried to suppress their language and culture. The world stood by as over 200,000 people died in Bosnia. It was not until after the bombing in Sarajevo and the horrors of the concentration camp at Srebrenica that NATO finally intervened. It is significant to note that the United Nations did not intervene.

• (2650)

It is important to remember that before NATO struck its first bomb over 225,000 Kosovo Albanians had already been burned out of their homes. For the west not to have acted after so many final warnings to Milosevic would have sent him and other despots the signal that they could terrorize their own populations and commit crimes against humanity without the world taking action. The notion that national sovereignty and sovereign immunity can act as a shield to genocide and to crimes against humanity is finally under significant challenge by the international community.

It is significant to note again that Pinochet is now being tried. The international criminal court is being created, in spite of U.S. opposition. In this context it is most enlightening to read the words of the former leader of the NDP, Tommy Douglas, in 1945 in his disagreement with another former leader of the CCF, J.S. Woodsworth. Those two had a disagreement over Woodsworth's pacifist stand on world war two. At that time Tommy Douglas said that when a group of lawless men endeavour to destroy the fabric of law and order by which alone human society is possible, then we have a responsibility to discharge.

As the immigration critic for the NDP I will limit most of my remarks to the impact that the Kosovo tragedy is having on the refugees and the people who may end up taking refuge in this country. It is helpful to start with a list of some of the current numbers.

As I said, the population of Kosovo is 90% ethnic Albanian. Of a total of 1.956 million people in Kosovo, more than 1.6 million are ethnic Albanians. Displaced from Kosovo homes in the last year, by NATO's own numbers, were 912,000 people. Fled or expelled since NATO began its air attacks were 450,000 people. So of those 912,000, 450,000 have fled in the last 19 days. It is easily the largest movement of displaced people in Europe since the second world war, causing unbelievable challenges to the neighbouring states to which these people are fleeing.

As the immigration critic for the NDP I have maintained all along that the most significant contribution Canada could make in this whole tragedy is not to be adding our meagre contribution to the military effort. I really believe that the world's super powers which are involved with NATO can easily handle the physical bombing of Milosevic's army. I believe and have maintained all along that Canada's contribution should be concentrated solely on the humanitarian side of the effort. I have advocated since March 24 that we should be airlifting Kosovar refugees into this country. I called for that in a press release which I issued on March 27. Canada should respond to the enormous flood of Kosovo refugees with a massive airlift similar to that which brought Hungarians to this country in 1956.

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I made the argument that with thousands of refugees literally flooding across the border into Albania, the neighbouring states simply cannot handle it and nobody on the ground is guaranteeing the safety of these people as they flee the conflict zones.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration shortly thereafter, on March 31, asking her to allow, through special ministerial permit, Kosovar refugees to come to this country because the groundswell of interest was really gaining momentum in my community and in many others.

We called upon the minister to use whatever means necessary, even if it meant creating a special category for these people, to allow them to seek refuge here; not to make them Canadian citizens, but simply to allow them sanctuary and safe refuge until they are able to return to where they properly belong.

The critics of this idea said that we would be playing into Milosevic's hands by helping him to cleanse his area, although I am trying to avoid the term ethnic cleansing. As the member for Halifax West correctly pointed out, it is not a term we should be using.

I disagree with the argument that we would be playing into Milosevic's hands. I believe that one of Milosevic's strategies is to destabilize the neighbouring states by flooding them with refugees in order to expand a greater Serbia by causing instability in those neighbouring states so that he could undertake some type of coup. We would actually be undermining this nefarious scheme by relieving the pressure on those states.

• (2655)

The second thing that the critics pointed out was the cost. Certainly there is a cost, but what is the cost of undertaking the military intervention that we are taking part in now? The six CF-18s stationed in Italy alone cost \$212 million a year. That is for six airplanes. We now have 12 over there. Every bomb costs \$25,000. The cost is unbelievable. As well, money would be spent in this country if these people were brought here.

I believe that all the preparations that have been made to accommodate Kosovar refugees in this country will still be used. Now that the Easter ceasefire has ended we anticipate an escalation in the expulsion and a further flood of refugees crossing the border. I believe that we will still need all the hospitality that Canadians expressed and all the preparations that we have made on the military bases.

I fully anticipate that Canada will be able to show its generosity and its hospitality by welcoming these new Canadians to this country, for sanctuary at least, and with all the hope and optimism that some or many will choose to become Canadian citizens.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I say to my

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colleague who sits on the citizenship and immigration committee that Canada originally wanted to take 5,000 refugees. As a matter of fact, everything was in place to do that. However, we were told by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Her Excellency Sadako Ogato, that they wanted to keep the Kosovars close to their former homeland.

The member made reference to the Hungarian revolution and the refugees that Canada took during that period of time. Let me tell the member, I know a lot about that. I was a refugee who came to Canada in 1957. Certainly the reception and the help we received from Canadians is remembered and appreciated and we try to give back in that regard.

Let me tell the hon. member that the nice difference I think with the Kosovar situation is that we are hoping the people of Kosovo will be able to go home. If there is any rainbow on the horizon, it is the fact that we are hopeful that things will resolve themselves as soon as possible. I think that all members of the House will pray for that and work toward that.

Once that happens, then the people can return to their homeland. I think the member would agree that is much more optimistic than was the case with the Hungarian refugees in 1957 who had no place to go. It was not until 1990 that the iron curtain fell.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very valid point. However, I do not have the same optimism that the Kosovar refugees will be able to return to their homes in the near future.

It is not unusual for refugees to find themselves in refugee camps for weeks, months and years. I recently hired a Vietnamese woman who spent two years sleeping on a dirt floor in a refugee camp, waiting to come to Canada, with 60,000 other Vietnamese refugees.

There are two reasons for which I do not think the Kosovar refugees will be able to return home. The first is the indication of how sinister and calculating the Milosevic Serbian government is being in its clearing of people. As it throws people out of their homes, whether they are torched or not, the land titles are torn up, as well as other documents such as birth certificates and any reference that this family ever existed in the community. It will be very difficult for Kosovars to claim ownership of their own land in eight weeks, two years or whenever.

Second, those refugees who have been lucky enough to get access to telephones have been phoning their old phone numbers in Kosovo and the phones are being answered by Serbian families who have already moved into the homes that the refugees vacated only weeks ago. The Serbian families are getting firmly entrenched into the communities and are claiming squatters' rights or legal ownership of those homes.

• (2700 )

I do not think it is will be possible for the 900,000 displaced people to simply reclaim their homes. This leads me to believe that if not now but in the very near future there will be a great demand for safe refuge, sanctuary and maybe even new homes for many of the displaced people. I know Canadians will be willing to do what they can because they have indicated that in very large numbers already.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time. I have listened to the debate throughout most of the day. Like many members and other Canadians I have learned quite a bit about the breadth of the issues that are facing Canada along with its NATO allies.

As all members have been exposed to feedback from their constituents, I thought I would start by sharing a couple of the experiences of my constituents. One person who is quite active in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has written to me often on matters such as the Kosovo conflict.

It is very interesting that these communications have indicated that the military aggression now taking place has actually exacerbated the situation and further instability in the Balkan region. This is a complex situation which has baffled negotiators for centuries. The situation has arguably led to two world wars. Some would argue that it could potentially lead to another one. They go on to argue what to expect with regard to a peaceful resolution to conflict around the world.

It is very important for those who fear the ravages of war around the world, its impact on people and human lives, to be heard. I want them to know that they are being heard, that they have been heard by me and by many members.

A Serbian family came to me who was so distraught with what was going on that it immediately wanted to make application to sponsor its parents to come to Canada. In fact they were already in Canada under a visa and thought it would be appropriate to find out if I might be able to make that happen.

As all members know it just does not happen that way. It is a process that is very difficult particularly when someone is already here on a visa. The concern was for no other reason than family. It was not an ethnic dispute but a matter of safety and security of family.

The piano store owner across the street from my constituency office was born in Yugoslavia and lived there most of his life. He came here with his family. He wanted to thank Canada for what it was doing over there. He knew what was happening. He knew the history and he told me all about it. Despite the fact that he knew there were people in harm's way, he wanted me to know that it was

important that we break this cycle, the centuries of ethnic wars and the killing of innocent people.

A Serbian gentleman came to my office and gave me quite a lecture about the centuries of history of the area. His basic conclusion was that it was their turn, that many Serbians had died over the years and that they had to get even. It was as bald as that. It was their turn to kill somebody.

• (2705 )

It dawned on me that in Canada we have probably very diverse opinions about what is going on, depending on one's background, depending on one's linkages to the Balkans, to European countries and to other places around the world that have experienced civil war, ethnic cleansing and genocide. Unfortunately this is part of our history.

Listening to the debate today makes me ask more questions and maybe provide more answers. It was clear that ethnic cleansing was going on as far back as 14 months ago. In October of last year it was even written about in the papers while negotiations were being held to somehow bring this matter to some stability, and it did not happen.

For the last 20 days the NATO alliance has been executing a military plan, a bombing plan. I wonder why NATO waited as long as it did. I wonder if that was not a big mistake. When we consider the number of people, the number of refugees that moved so quickly to the borders and literally overwhelmed the NATO allies in terms of sheer numbers, it was clear that NATO was not ready for that number of people.

It was also a big surprise that some 250,000 refugees are still within Kosovo. There is grave concern about their safety. They have no shelter. They have no food. Who knows what their fate is? This raises some very serious questions about what is going on.

Canadian people responded to a poll recorded in today's press about their degree of support for the current actions of the government. It surprised a lot of people, probably the defence department and the foreign affairs department as much as any. It was no surprise that Canadians had opened up their hearts to the refugees and wanted to help in whatever way possible.

I think it is a big mystery to Canadians why refugees ultimately did not want to come to Canada. It begs a question. The linkage is to the strength of feelings in the Balkans. Canadians are having some difficulty understanding why people who are in harm's way and literally without food and shelter would not accept a helping hand and come to the safety of Canada.

It is difficult to understand. We need to understand that there is something more to this situation than simply a civil war. There is something much more when we see Serbian demonstrators daily in downtown Toronto, for the most part peacefully demonstrating but

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fervently stating that their situation is such that we must have the bombing stopped because their families are in harm's way.

Most people would ask whether they are also concerned about ethnic Albanians. I am sure stories will be coming out of the atrocities, of the rapes, of the murders and of the slaughters of people. Are they not also concerned about that? No. They are concerned about their families and it being their turn.

When we hear such things we wonder how Canadians will feel when the dimensions of what has happened become public, when we find out how bad the situation is and how many people have been affected by the situation even in the short period of time.

In the last moments of my speech I want to dwell on the whole issue that has been raised in the House about having a vote. It struck me that the Reform Party, for instance, wants to know the military, political and moral objectives and dimensions so that we can debate them and have a vote on them before we do something. I believe the NDP is of the same view, that we have to vote. We may have to ease up on some of the NATO requirements before we feel we have an opportunity to bring the negotiators back to the table.

• (2710)

I found out today that the vote being asked for, at least by the NDP, is not a vote and debate before the government takes action. NDP members made it very clear that they wanted to have a vote after the government had made its decision and after action was been taken by NATO. They just want a vote so that in retrospect they can put their position on the table after a decision has been taken.

It is very important to know that because that is not the way it was presented to the House. It was presented that before the government took action we wanted to have a say and a vote. It is important for Canadians to know that strategically and militarily it would be somewhat foolish to have the House debate the dimensions of a proposed action.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a question about what my Liberal colleague mentioned toward the end of his speech about a vote in the House of Commons. He mentioned the New Democratic Party and ourselves. It is very clear that in question period yesterday the call for a vote was in reference to deployment of future troops should that be necessary. That is what the question was about. That is what opposition parties were asking about. It was quite clear.

The member said that he was listening to the debate. He must have missed some of it because it was clearly stated that members of the opposition were not asking for a vote on the motion before the House today. They were simply asking that the government put to a vote the issue of whether or not ground troops should be deployed, or if that question were to arise that it be debated fully in the House and that a vote be held not as a partisan issue of opposition versus government but as an issue on which all mem-

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bers could debate and, I would anticipate, strongly support the government in doing that as an issue of process.

Would the member comment on that specific and not go back into history and reiterate something that was not stated by members of the opposition in the New Democratic Party or in the Reform Party? Does he think that it would be a good thing, should the time come where ground troops are necessary, to have an open debate in the House and then to put it to a vote? Then there could be a gathering together of members and of public opinion on the issue to which he referred in his speech.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the member will remember this months from now when we reflect on what happened. It shows precisely how little Reform Party members understand strategic military activity, how little they understand being part of an alliance in a war.

The member honestly believes that in a middle of a war we should be thinking of going back to the legislators and having a debate. As one of his colleagues said, they should be told the moral, political and military dimensions so they can have a big debate. Then there will be a vote on it to determine whether or not to take the next strategic military step.

If we had done that it would no longer be strategic. It would no longer be an element of military activity. We cannot have that debate before it is done. We cannot do that in the middle of a war. The member does not understand that, but the NDP does. If the member would talk to NDP members he would understand what they were asking for. If, as and when ground troops are used in the Kosovo conflict and Canada participated, they are asking for a vote in the House after the fact on whether or not they agreed with the government's action.

• (2715 )

The Reform Party is suggesting that somehow the vote would be taken before taking action. The NDP vote would be a vote after the government has taken action and it is a matter of whether or not a confidence in the government's action would be taken. That is the difference between the Reform Party and the NDP.

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is 3.16 a.m. and we still have members in the House. We are debating for the third time the situation in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration documented some of the humanitarian responses from Canadians and put forth our generosity as well as our concerns.

The Prime Minister spoke in the House. He stated "I look forward today to hearing the views and concerns from members on all sides of the House because whatever our individual views are about involvement in Kosovo, we are each guided by our desire to do the right thing for Canada and for the international community". The Prime Minister talked about taking great pride in the efforts and the work of our forces as well as that of government and non-government organizations that are on the front lines.

On occasions such as this I retreat to one of my favourite places in this building. The memorial chamber, where the names of the Canadian war dead are listed, puts in real perspective the issues we are dealing with.

Debates such as this one have a very personal meaning for me. Tonight bombs are falling less than 100 kilometres from where I was born. Tonight hundreds of thousands of Kosovars are without homes, without identity cards and often without their loved ones.

I know their fears for they were my fears four decades ago when Soviet tanks stamped out freedom in my former homeland. That year in Hungary, 1956, for a brief moment we had hope that help would come, but it did not. Many had hope that help would come but it did not. I think of those who died that year in Hungary, later in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rwanda and the killing fields of Cambodia. Those unspeakable crimes occurred after we said never again.

Last week we saw the crowded trains crammed with refugees without identity cards or belongings. We had seen those trains before on the way to Auschwitz and Buchenwald. People on those trains told us of atrocities occurring in the heart of Europe not far from those death camps that we thought we would never see again.

This time it is different. Help will come. Canada in partnership with our allies will not let Slobodan Milosevic and the evil he represents escape responsibility for his crimes.

The leader of the New Democratic Party spoke eloquently about Tommy Douglas' speech in 1939 when the second world war occurred. There were those in the ranks of his party who said what happened in Europe did not matter to Canada. Mr. Douglas said that when the lawless destroy the basic principles of human order and decency, Canada cannot step aside. Many others at that time did and the League of Nations was unable to act. But Canada and a few others stepped forward to confront the fundamental evil that fascism represented. Thank God they did.

Each year on Armistice Day all of us pay tribute to our veterans for fighting so bravely in a war that we are proud to have fought. We defeated fascism and in the aftermath of war, we built a more just society in Canada itself, one that respects basic human rights and freedoms.



• (2720)

This year our soldiers are fighting again to defeat a fascist mentality that feeds ethnic hatred. We fought before to defeat those who hated and killed Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and newspaper editors who would not agree.

What we hear from Belgrade today is all too familiar, all too dangerous. In September 1996 I observed elections in Bosnia in the historic city of Mostar. I saw too many fresh flowers on gravesites. My interpreter, Igor, showed me the grave of his best friend Boris who was killed in 1994 at the age of 20. His parents brought flowers to his gravesite every day.

I have heard others say that NATO is going too far. I ask who else has come forward? United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that sometimes it is necessary to use force when those who use brutal violence against their own people defy compromise.

The United Nations could not act. The Chinese even vetoed the extension of the United Nations force in Macedonia. There was no hope that the United Nations would have acted.

We must remember that the United Nations offered compromises and failed. NATO offered compromises and failed. Milosevic lied to his emissaries while he prepared his bloody and criminal attack on Kosovo.

Should we fail, the alternatives are unthinkable. Could we accept Milosevic's sneer of triumph? Could we accept that he could ethnically cleanse over a million people? If we end our century that way, what hope do we have for the future?

I remember the fall of 1956 when we hoped for help which never came. I know how Kosovars feel this evening as they hope to return to their homes, their families and their communities. This time we can offer hope. We can confront evil. We can make the worst horrors of this century a thing of the past, not a forecast of the new century's future.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly share the member's feelings that everyone's first choice is that the ethnic Kosovars end up going back to their own homes. As I outlined, there could be some obstacles in that records are being torn up, land titles are being burned. As the member said, even IDs such as birth certificates are being seized to make it harder for them and to further destabilize the region.

A second problem exists. As a previous speaker pointed out, we have underestimated the level of animosity. Some of the refugees are so seized with the idea of going back and reclaiming their homeland that they are turning down an opportunity that would actually be better for their families, to get their families out of harm's way, get them to a safe sanctuary like Canada even if just

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temporarily. It indicates the level of animosity and even hatred between those two camps. Most Canadians, unless they have been there and I have not been there, probably underestimate that.

What level of interest does the member have in pushing to have more of the ethnic Kosovars taken from the area where they are in imminent danger or living in unsatisfactory refugee camps and having them come here, providing them safe refuge and ultimately hoping that many will choose to make Canada their home and settle here?

• (2725)

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi:** Mr. Speaker, let me say to the hon. member that there are horrible challenges facing Canada, NATO and the United Nations.

On the upside, there is the whole issue of identification which is being looked at now and identifications are going to be issued. That is good because now is the time they can gather the information and make cross-references and issue truly verified identification.

After the war, Europe was devastated and rebuilding began. I am hoping the same will happen in Kosovo once the situation stabilizes.

Canada is ready to welcome refugees, be it on a temporary or full time basis. The minister has said that. We are hearing from the people in Kosovo that they would rather remain close to their homeland. I am hopeful and I believe the rest of the House is hopeful that their dreams and aspirations will be realized.

Let me talk about what is so beautiful and magical about this country. Every religious group and every ethnic group inhabits this land called Canada. We are able to use our diversities as strengths.

The real tragedy and scary thing for us is looking over there and seeing how diversity is used as a weakness to be exploited by very unscrupulous people. It is something we have to fight against continually. We have to do whatever we can to stabilize the situation there. It is not just Kosovo. We have to look at what is happening in Bosnia and Hercegovina. We have people on the ground keeping peace, making sure that various ethnic groups are working together as much as possible and certainly stopping ethnic cleansing and stopping crimes based on ethnicity.

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

As immigration critic for the PC party, it is incumbent upon me to make a few remarks on the human tragedy that is Kosovo. I am very pleased that this debate is taking place. I must say that sitting here for the last 17 hours, since 10 o'clock Monday morning, I am beginning to learn a little bit about what is a very complicated issue.

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I want to say as well that I question the usefulness of conducting such an important debate at three and four o'clock in the morning when most reasonable people are asleep, instead of at a time when they can conveniently hear what we have to say. But such is the way of politics.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a few remarks on this very important issue. Every day on television we see a tide of Kosovar Albanians trudging to refuge outside their homeland leaving behind their burning villages and their friends and relatives who have been spirited away or even executed by Serbian security forces. Over the past number of years we have seen similar scenes in Croatia and Bosnia, but the sheer speed and magnitude of the current exodus has riveted the world's attention.

There are two aspects to the crisis which I want to address, the refugee situation and the military situation. With regard to the Kosovo refugees, I am pleased that Canada was willing to accept and make preparations to take in 5,000 of these very unfortunate people. As a nation whose involvement there is driven by humanitarian concerns, we could not do less. The minister indicated that the government was willing to set aside approximately \$100 million for that purpose.

• (2730)

Now that the United Nations has expressed a preference for those refugees to stay in their region, I do hope that the majority of these funds can be redirected to relief efforts on the ground in Europe. However, today in question period the minister did not answer my question as the availability of these funds. Rather, the Minister of International Affairs spoke of the \$22 million her department had spent so far.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration also stated, in answer to another question, that our proposed airlift of 5,000 refugees would not be necessary because the situation on the border had stabilized. However, we hear that the Yugoslavs have shelled Albania and refugees continue to pour out of Kosovo.

I also have concerns about the fact that we appear to have been caught off guard with respect to our position on the Kosovo refugees. On Friday, April 2 our position was that we would not be accepting refugees from Kosovo. The following day we were ready to accept 5,000. On April 9 we were only accepting refugees with special needs under ministerial permit. Yesterday our special envoy in Kosovo said we are talking about immigration, not temporary protection. It is rather confusing.

The point I am trying to make is that we should have known the likely result of military intervention and that the refugee exodus would likely accelerate. We appear to have been caught off guard as far as the refugees are concerned. If the basis for our military intervention was humanitarian, then surely government planners should have seen that there was a role for our refugee and immigration officials as well.

The minister has indicated that she will be issuing ministerial permits for refugees with special needs. One has to ask what that mean in practical terms. Are we talking about people with special medical needs? Are we talking about the adoption of orphans and the reunification of families? Are we talking about potential new immigrants who will need language training and a host of other settlement services?

Have arrangements been made with the provincial and municipal governments delivering health and various social services in Canada? Will some of that \$100 million be used to fund any extraordinary costs incurred by these local agencies and governments?

These are all very legitimate questions and Canadians have a right to expect clear answers.

We pride ourselves on being a compassionate nation, but in order to do a good job we need to approach these issues in an organized way. Compassion without the necessary ways and means only raises expectations unfairly. Surely these people have already suffered enough.

The other situation about which I am concerned is our military position in all of this. It is regrettable that we did not get to debate this matter before the air force was committed to go in and fight. The bottom line is that we are now embroiled in a military conflict overseas.

Many military experts, who we hear talking on TV about this particular issue, feel that this will inevitably lead to the involvement of ground troops. While polling would seem to indicate that a majority of the Canadian public currently support the government's position, one has to ask if that opinion would hold if we get into an all out war in the hills and mountains of Kosovo, a war that would inevitably lead to casualties on all sides.

As one Canadian, I have grave concerns about the way we seem to have gotten into a conflict without a long term view of the consequences. I need not remind the House that this region of Europe tied down many Nazi divisions during World War II in a grinding war of attrition with terrible atrocities committed on all sides. We have already seen earlier examples of ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia, with enough blame and blood to go around for all. I therefore have to ask the question: Are we up for this, both psychologically and militarily? There is no doubt that during World War II we were involved in a total war.

• (2735)

I have every confidence in the professionalism of our armed forces, but I fear the government has presided over our military being reduced in numbers and is sadly lacking in equipment to do the job.

We cannot play at war. NATO is now committed and has very little choice but to follow through on its commitments. In the Vietnam war we saw what it was like to fight a war wherein the

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daily targets were decided in the White House and not in the Pentagon. The result was a war that dragged on for years.

No matter if we call this a conflict or a war, we had best be clear about our objectives and have the will to do what is necessary. We cannot forget that the Yugoslav leadership will be ruthless in its use of military and paramilitary forces. We must not send our soldiers and our airmen into harm's way with one arm tied behind their back.

It is sad that Canada, once a leader in world affairs and champion of the United Nations peacekeeping, is now caught up in this conflict. However, now that the dye is cast we had best get serious about our humanitarian and military roles in Kosovo.

The Canadian people are a good people. They deserve better leadership in this crisis than what we have seen so far. It is time for the government to hold parliamentary debates on these matters before our troops are put in harm's way. It is time for the government to make clear our objectives and our ways and means of carrying out our various roles in the escalating conflict and humanitarian disaster.

In short, we should discuss our duty, define our duty and fulfill that duty with all of the determination and pride that has served us so well in the past.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many will want to speculate about how this war will play out over the next while.

The NATO conditions are: that Slobodan Milosevic stop the killing and expelling of ethnic Albanians; that he withdraw his army and guarantee refugees a safe return to their homes; that he permit an international presence for the security of those people; and that he sign a binding peace settlement as per the interim agreement.

I am sure the member would agree that there is very little likelihood that Milosevic will eventually accept those conditions. He probably will not agree to withdraw his army nor accept the NATO force as the peacekeeping force there. Given that is the case, I think it would be reasonable to speculate that the possibility of ground troops is very high and that NATO forces have to be prepared to act.

The member suggested we should be careful about putting our military in harm's way. He probably knows that they are already in harm's way. They are flying sorties and are subject to anti-aircraft fire now. They also know that Canada is prepared to participate to the extent that it can. It will also not deploy troops who are not well prepared to do their jobs the way they should to do done.

Is the member seriously thinking that somehow the House has to suspend the war in Kosovo and come back to parliament to discuss again whether or not we should deploy ground troops, or would he

not agree that is exactly what we have been talking about in this debate that started yesterday at 3 p.m.?

• (2740 )

**Mr. Norman Doyle:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we are very much aware that the military is already in harm's way, but the possibility of casualties will be so much greater if we send in ground troops.

The official position of our party is that we will support sending in ground troops to Yugoslavia if that is the only means by which peace and stability can be achieved in that particular area.

However, many more military casualties will occur if we do send in ground troops. Many military experts feel that it will inevitably lead to casualties. While opinion polls now support the government in its efforts so far, I am just wondering if the opinion and support of the Canadian people will hold once ground troops go in and they see the inevitable casualties.

We on this side of the House support the involvement of ground troops, if that is the only way to achieve peace and stability, but we also feel strongly that such an action should not only be debated in the House of Commons but voted on as well. That is what we support.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great concern that I rise today to speak about the important issue of Canada's involvement in NATO's intervention in Kosovo.

This intervention is one of the riskiest ventures that NATO has ever participated in. The air strikes against Bosnian Serbs in 1995 were successful in many ways. In due course a treaty was signed which has since then worked fairly well. I visited Bosnia with the foreign affairs committee in the fall of 1997 and was able to see some of the success of the Dayton accord and the post-Dayton situation is relatively stable.

Canadian peacekeepers are respected globally. I saw first-hand the professionalism of the Canadian peacekeepers who were participating in the S-4 intervention in the former Yugoslavia. It really made me very proud to be a Canadian.

Periodic air attacks in Iraq by the U.S. have helped to prevent Saddam Hussein from committing some atrocities. He has still continued to flare up periodically and to commit atrocities against his own and other people, but the air strikes have helped somewhat.

This time, however, it is different. This is the first attack on a sovereign state that stands accused of vile behaviour not to its neighbours but to its own people. Where was NATO for instance when Russia tried to squelch the Chechnians at a cost of 100,000 lives? What did we do to try to prevent genocide in Rwanda in terms of significant interventions?

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How would the west respond, for instance, if China were to carry out air strikes against an Indian government that was fighting to prevent a Muslim majority province such as Jammu-Kashmir from seceding, or if one country were to intervene in another country's internal debates about issues of human rights or ethnic cleansing?

In Serbia, we are dealing with a better armed and more militarily sophisticated group than the Bosnian Serbs. It is in fact more militarily equipped and more sophisticated than latter day Iraq.

Hopefully, the smart bombs and the missiles can achieve victory without the use of ground troops. However, I think that is naive. I think the Canadian government, in creating an expectation that is possible, has misled many Canadians. Many military experts, including the supreme general of NATO and the U.S. military experts, have agreed with the view that ground troops will be necessary.

• (2745)

In Kosovo and Serbia the military targets and the civilians are inextricably linked. As my hon. colleague from St. John's East mentioned, the terrain in Kosovo is not conducive to effective air strikes.

NATO members are becoming increasingly uneasy. The goals of the air attacks were to end Serbia's brutalities against the ethnic Albanians, who make up nine-tenths of the population of Kosovo, and at the same time not break up the country. Yet in the first four days of NATO air attacks the number of Kosovars driven from their homes had risen to 500,000, one-quarter of the population. Up to 100,000 Kosovars have been killed.

By last week about 1.1 million of Kosovo's 1.8 million people had been driven out of their homes. NATO seemed unprepared. There was a chaotic response to the refugee issue. The response from Canadians at the grassroots level who wanted to help was very warm. I saw it in my own riding. To see Canadian non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army coming forward and individual Canadians offering to help reaffirmed my belief in the Canadian people. However, at the same time NATO and this government's participation in NATO did not seem prepared for the inevitable issue of the refugees.

While NATO has carried out the bombing, the Serb forces in Kosovo have continued ethnic cleansing. In fairness, this ethnic cleansing, these killings, would have taken place anyway. They would have taken place perhaps at a more leisurely pace than they have, but they would have taken place.

I received a petition today in my constituency office from a group in Wolfville. The petition states:

We want an immediate end to the bombings and a return to diplomacy and negotiation with the active involvement of the UN.

This group generally feels that the bombings have heightened a sense of nationalism and in fact have strengthened Milosevic. The group is right in a way because the bombings have strengthened the resolve of the Serbians and Milosevic's popularity is up. However, I believe that sustained bombing over a period of time could serve to sap morale and lead to the Serb population questioning Milosevic, making it more difficult for him to lead and defend what is an untenable position.

Perhaps Milosevic will give up the ungovernable province of Kosovo anyway, in the same way that he has given up territories in the past which he had previously said he would not give up. Part of Milosevic's strategy has always been to create a sense of martyrdom with the Serbs, to revel in this martyrdom and past defeats. He almost celebrates these defeats. It is possible that at some point he will give up at least some of his demands in relation to the Kosovo issue.

It is possible also that the Kosovar guerrillas will be effective on the ground against Serb soldiers in the same way that the Croat soldiers were during the NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serbs in 1995. We do not really know if the Kosovars have an effective soldiery now, but there is a risk that the Kosovar ground troops could get an upper hand. It will be very difficult for NATO to stop the Kosovar troops from butchering the Serb minority in Kosovo and declaring independence. That is an issue we have to look at as well.

The west does not want that. It does not want to break up Yugoslavia. It is not there for either side to win. It just wants security for the Kosovars, the ethnic Albanians.

Ground troops may be necessary. NATO currently has 12,000 troops in Macedonia. The Serbs have 40,000 troops in Kosovo. NATO would need about 150,000 troops for a decisive victory.

There would be many casualties and as mission creep evolved there would be comparisons with Vietnam. There are several NATO countries which might back out. Greece, Italy and the Czech republic are already lukewarm at best.

• (2750)

I believe that NATO was right in principle to intervene. We should not hide behind the antiquated 19th century notion of national security solely as a foreign policy imperative. The evolution of human security in the post-cold war environment is a very important evolution. There have been 100 conflicts in the post-cold war environment. Most of them have been interstate conflicts and most of those have been between governments and their own people.

We have seen the evolution of an international criminal court. We see cases like the Pinochet case. Leaders simply cannot get

away with atrocities against their own people as they were able to do in the past.

We only need look back at the film footage of the liberation of some of the concentration camps at the end of World War II to realize that there were times in the past when we should have intervened and did not. Today more than ever, in the post-cold war environment, with the evolution of human security, there are times when we must act and I believe that this is one of those times.

However, there must be a new global framework that can work to avert crises by addressing them earlier through a concerted effort by the UN. I heard one member speak earlier about the involvement of the IMF and the World Bank. We could use diplomatic and economic levers and evolve some of the institutions, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, which need to be reformed to reflect current realities. Canada should play a leadership role in these fora and I am concerned that Canada is not maximizing its leadership as it should.

Even if we accept human security as an imperative, where do we draw the line? Where do we intervene and where do we not intervene? Are we prepared to intervene in the inevitability of ground troops? Is our Canadian military prepared? I fear that is not the case. The government has allowed the Canadian military to reach a crisis situation of its own in terms of equipment and personnel.

The bottom line is that these types of debates are very important. They should be accompanied by a vote. Certainly before we send ground troops to Kosovo it is very important that we have a full debate in the House, with a vote, to demonstrate unequivocally that not only are the members of the House unanimously committed to this very important humanitarian effort, but that Canadians value democracy enough to protect it within their own borders.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made some interesting points, but he made a statement that I do not think was quite correct when he said that NATO members were becoming uneasy. From all of the reports and the press conference given by NATO today, following the meeting of the foreign affairs ministers of the NATO alliance, they are unanimous and are united in the efforts of the alliance.

The member also mentioned, and it is too bad the Speaker did not pick it up, misleading Canadians about ground troops. When Canada entered into this war with its fighter aircraft and put its military in harm's way there was nothing misleading about it. Canada has agreed to participate in this NATO effort because of its importance.

I know that the member appreciates the significance of what is happening over there, the significance of the atrocities and the fact that there is no logical conclusion to this situation on its own. There is nothing that is going to break this cycle of genocide and violence unless the NATO allies step in to protect lives.

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My question really has to do with a vote. I am still looking for the answer as to how it is possible that the NATO alliance could suspend its activities and have its participating members go back to their countries to ask their governments and their legislators to have a debate on all of the details of their next move and then have a vote on it before they make the move. It sounds a bit foolish to me to suggest that somehow we are going to discuss military strategy and have a vote on it before it happens.

• (2755)

I would like the member to try to explain to me and to Canadians how exactly we are going to suspend a war while we consider what we are considering today.

**Mr. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, there is unease within NATO among some of the 19 member countries. Countries like Italy, Greece and the Czech republic are committed, but there has been a certain trepidation in their commitment. The commitment of ground troops would further strain what is already a commitment with significant concern and reservation.

Relative to the issue of voting in this House to determine whether we should send ground troops, the issue of committing to air strikes is quite different for many Canadians than the issue of committing to ground troops. There are Canadians who feel it is appropriate that we are committed to participate through NATO in air strikes, but they would question our participation with ground troops.

The hon. member opposite suggested that my position on this was foolish. It is not as foolish as the position of the current Prime Minister at the time of the Persian Gulf crisis when he said that it was all right to send Canadian forces into the Persian Gulf, but it was very important that they all come back the first time a shot was fired, which was at best illogical, and at worst ridiculous and idiotic.

It is important to reflect on what the Prime Minister said earlier today. He said that we did not have to have votes in the House of Commons about these issues. In fact, it was more democratic to give members the opportunity to talk, but not to vote. I suggest that the Prime Minister deliver that message to Canadians and suggest to them that in the next election they would be much better off if they did not have a vote but were given a few minutes to talk. They would not be allowed to elect anybody, but they would be allowed to talk about it. That was the Prime Minister's suggestion earlier. The logical corollary would be that we would have 30 million Canadians in the next election talking but no one actually voting.

These are complex issues and I really believe that we owe it to Canadians to debate them and vote on them in the House of Commons. In fact, there are some countries, prior to intervention, which require voting on the commitment of military resources and

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ground troops. I do not understand the rationale for the Liberal opposition to democracy on this or many other fronts.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank members for the opportunity to share with them a few moments to reflect, discuss and consider Canada's participation in a very sad and tragic conflict in a region many of us know as eastern Europe.

I share with all Canadians, especially the constituents of my northern Ontario riding of Algoma—Manitoulin, a great sense of sadness that a century, indeed a millennium, is ending with war.

It may seem that this conflict is unique. Unfortunately it is one of many conflicts ongoing around the world. It is, however, at this point in time, in terms of air power, manpower and the involvement of armed forces personnel, the largest conflict that we are seeing on our television screens, hour after hour, day in and day out. Like the conflicts in Northern Ireland, in Africa and in many other parts of the world there is no easy solution. There is no simple set of reasons which brought the players to this place in time.

• (2800)

I am no expert in history. Like many Canadians I am probably not aware of all the facts. In this case we have to search back hundreds and hundreds of years to find many of the reasons for the conflict today.

As average Canadians and as we attempt as members of parliament to represent our constituents as best we can, we see the tragedy unfolding in the present. It is difficult for us to fully appreciate what brought the players, the stakeholders in this tragic conflict, to this point in time.

Before saying too much more, I would like to join my colleagues in commending our Canadian armed personnel that are involved directly in the Balkans or are in Canada providing very necessary support. Our hearts, our best wishes, our prayers go out to all of them.

I also want to say a few words commending many constituents in my riding. I think of the Killens family on Manitoulin Island, the Timeriskis on Elliot Lake, Reeve Aquino in Wawa and others. Those Canadians have picked up the phone, contacted their local service clubs, or have taken different initiatives to express in one way or another their support and their willingness to help the hundreds of thousands of refugees displaced in this conflict.

We live in a beautiful country. For the most part we live in relative comfort. It is easy for us to dismiss and not fully understand the degree of suffering that is going on. I include myself in that comment. It behoves us to make an extra effort to realize that hundreds of thousands of people have been removed from homes in which they have lived for generations, from communities

where they have invested their lives. Their parents are from there and their ancestors are from there, yet they have been forcibly removed and taken to strange places and camps beyond their borders.

It is difficult for us to understand the deep sense of loss the refugees are feeling. When Canadians reach out and offer their assistance they are doing so with an appreciation that we are fortunate. Whatever Canada and Canadians can do to help to make sure those who are displaced can find some measure of comfort while this conflict continues is important.

The news tends to focus on what the leaders on all sides are doing. Far be it from me to understand the thinking of President Milosevic and his cohorts. I cannot understand how one human being can act such as we have seen toward another.

• (2805)

There are apologists on all sides. I am sure Mr. Milosevic has provided many reasons for what he has done, but what I see most of all is denial of the fact that at the grassroots it is innocent people who are being hurt.

There are innocent people on all sides. If average Serbian citizens who work in the restaurants and in the factories knew all the facts, I do not believe they could possibly support Mr. Milosevic. They too are victims in a way. They have seen conflict over many years. Certainly there are innocent victims in the Kosovo region.

If average citizens are for the most part innocent victims of what is going on, how can we as a civilized nation in any way do anything but participate in as forceful and as useful a way as possible? To those who would say we should not be participating in NATO, I suggest that had we chosen not to participate and NATO could not intervene in air attacks there would be no end in sight. It may seem even today that there is no end in sight but at least there is hope. Had NATO not decided to become involved, I believe Mr. Milosevic would have not only continued his atrocities in the way we have seen but even more so. I would worry not only about Montenegro but in fact the destabilization of the entire region.

I realize there is no vote at the end of this debate. It is difficult to debate the kind of action we should take in a conflict situation, but these debates are extremely important for Canadians, for all parliamentarians and for the leadership of the government who after all were duly elected to lead. These debates are of great assistance to the Prime Minister, to cabinet and in fact to all of us. They help to make sure this place has a sense of what Canadians are thinking from coast to coast.

I support Canada's involvement in NATO and the need for air strikes. If we accept what we see on the news it may be questionable whether we are seeing any progress. Is there a perfect solution

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to this conflict? I doubt it. We have to try to come out with the best solution from among many terrible solutions. If it takes a massive air offensive to destroy the military machine of President Milosevic and his so-called government, that is what we must do. We must shut down his ability to continue destabilizing not only citizens of his own region but those of a much wider area.

When it comes to the question of whether Canada should participate in a ground offensive, it certainly raises the stakes. I am not any kind of military expert. I doubt there are many here. We are just members of parliament trying to do our best to understand a very complex situation. My intuition is that it will be inevitable, that a ground offensive of some sort will be necessary.

• (2810)

Based on the Rambouillet negotiations it was hoped that at some point in time there would be an agreement that the NATO alliance, the United Nations and other bodies would create a force to essentially keep the peace.

As the days and weeks go by and we attempt to understand the thinking of President Milosevic, I conclude that we are not dealing with a leader who goes by any rules of engagement that we would ever understand. The use of deceit and manoeuvres designed to manipulate have convinced me that as much as we all want a negotiated settlement, the probability of that is not very high. As much as all of my colleagues and I would shudder at the thought of sending ground troops, Canadian military men and women to this region, it may be inevitable.

We are looking at a situation where hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo have been removed to places outside the region or into the mountains. Under the current circumstances they cannot return to their homes. If we believe as a member of NATO and as a civilized nation that ethnic Albanian Kosovars deserve the opportunity to go back to their homes and to rebuild, we must be involved, because Mr. Milosevic will not allow the creating of space to which they can return. Sadly that may mean space will need to be created on the ground by foot soldiers, by infantry. That is a dangerous situation.

There is no perfect solution. We cannot turn the clock back. Turning the clock back would mean going back hundreds and hundreds of years. It cannot be done. Emotions are running too high. We could look at the conflict in Northern Ireland, which is a little closer to home and maybe a little easier to understand. The emotions and feelings of nationalism running as deeply as we see in the Balkans, Ireland and elsewhere are not erased overnight. It will take years, decades or longer, maybe well beyond our own lifetimes, for there to be real solutions.

That does not mean we should sit back and allow the so-called ethnic cleansing to continue. As we close this century it is an absurd thought that we should sit back. We have done that before in

this century and there was too much loss of life, dignity and civility.

As much as I would be reluctant to support any further engagement of Canadians, I feel it may be necessary. If it becomes necessary given all the facts, my constituents and I would support it. We would hope there would be no loss of life at all but realistically we have to be prepared for anything.

The air war up to this moment has resulted essentially in zero losses on the NATO side. There has been loss of life in Serbia and in Kosovo, the vast majority of it perpetrated by President Milosevic and a small number as a consequence of NATO's attempts to shut down the government and the regime of Mr. Milosevic.

• (2815)

As a civilized nation we owe it to our children and grandchildren to end conflict, but sometimes to end conflict it is necessary to engage in conflict. It seems oxymoronic that we must fight to end fighting, but a glance at history will show that is too often the case. We cannot avoid it simply because we wish it to go away.

I believe there may be a silver lining to this very dark cloud. This conflict is so public and so in our face because of the media coverage. Even though it is far away, it is still close to home. Maybe this conflict will provide us with the impetus to reconsider how we as a collection of nations allied for peace can involve ourselves in conflicts in areas which themselves are sovereign.

How do we learn from this experience where to draw the line on sovereignty? How do we know exactly when to intervene in a regional conflict when it may mean, as it has here, crossing into another country and interfering in a constructive way with a government in order to bring about peace?

I do not suggest that I have all the answers. Hopefully at least the worst of this conflict will be resolved in the next few weeks. I hope that in the wake of this conflict, NATO and all the member nations of the UN will pick through the bones of this conflict in an attempt to achieve some degree of wisdom. If and when this should happen again, we will know better how to resolve these conflicts and in the best way for all the stakeholders.

In conclusion, our hearts go out to the refugees. Our hearts go out to all the innocent victims of the conflict in this region, including those innocent people in Serbia who themselves do not support their own government in its ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Our hearts go out to those refugees who have been removed from their homes and who now sleep under plastic tarps, if they even have a plastic tarp.

I applaud our government, all Canadians and the relief agencies in their efforts to bring food, shelter, medicine and supplies to those in need at this time.

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It is a tough issue, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for this opportunity to say a few words.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will begin with a few comments, then put a question to my colleague across the way.

This is the first time I take part in this debate. I must say that it feels strange to rise in this House at 4.20 a.m. If today's debate is one society must hold, I find it somewhat odd that it should take place during the night since this is a time when most people are sleeping. I find it rather ironic that such a debate be held during the night.

• (2820)

The other problem I have with this debate is that I find it difficult to talk with conviction about a topic that is so mind-boggling. What is going on in Europe right now is ethnic cleansing. I find it easier to understand when we talk about economic war. Tonight I was watching a report by Céline Galipeau, who was just back from the war zone. She said that even the local people have trouble understanding what is going on.

Today, as parliamentarians, we are supposed to debate something that is happening halfway across the world and that even the people involved have trouble understanding.

I must say that this is far from restoring my faith in humanity, particularly when this year marked the 50th anniversary of the charter of rights. We have recently also marked the 50th anniversary of the second world war, with its memories of Auschwitz and so on. Those in my generation were always told "Remember these events, so that you do not have to witness anything like it in your lifetime."

A few years later, here we are, witnessing scenes exactly like those of 50 years ago. This is unbelievable. We must not forget to speak, at least to say that there is something incomprehensible in it all. Perhaps it is because of my young age that I speak this way this evening. It may be, but it is also because I think there are many people throughout the world who have trouble understanding all this.

I have a duty today as a parliamentarian, along with all the other members of this House, to talk military tactics, when I have no clue as to how things work when one wants to intervene to change a situation somewhere.

It has to be done, however. This debate is essential. As parliamentarians, we must nevertheless be cautious because we have only limited information available to us. I have to form my opinions on this situation like most other people in the world, by listening to the news and watching the major television networks.

We have seen that foreign journalists have been expelled from Kosovo. We must therefore form our opinions on a conflict that is hard to understand to begin with, on the basis of a rather limited amount of information. What I would like to ask my colleague across the floor is this: Does he believe that parliamentarians have the pertinent information required for holding such a debate?

[*English*]

**Mr. Reed Elley:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I appreciate my hon. colleague's speech, but I would like to know if he has a question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member was in the very act of asking his question. I was allowing him to go on a little because there are only two members rising on questions and comments and we do have 10 minutes in this case. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Reform Party is quite right. I put the question. Naturally, I believe in the importance of this debate. But I put the following question to him: does he think that parliamentarians have information that is relevant and essential to such a debate? I raise the matter of the quality of the debate. I do not question the need for it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe for a moment that we have all the facts. I do not believe it is possible in anything as complex as this conflict that we could ever have all the facts.

I agree with the hon. member that much of the information we get is from the news networks. By their nature, coming from the western side so to speak, there may be a degree of western bias. That bias is mostly the result of the fact that journalists, as the hon. member has suggested, have been expelled from the principal region of conflict, from Kosovo.

• (2825)

Even though we may not have all the facts, I do believe that the journalists involved in interviewing refugees and others are attempting to glean as much of the true story as is possible. At best, we have available to us partial information. But when partial information comes from many directions and it is pieced together, it is possible to say with a reasonable degree of certainty that what is happening is actually taking place.

When a small child is about to tip a pot of boiling water from the stove onto his or her face, you do not stop to consider that it is gravity that is going to cause that pot to fall. You look at exactly what is happening and the potential for serious harm to the child.

In this case there is much that we do not know directly, but we have seen enough and know enough to act, and to act firmly and fairly. Even though Canada's reputation as a peacemaker and a



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peacekeeper may be compromised in the minds of some, in my mind it is not in the least.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech.

He supports the NATO involvement in Kosovo and feels that the situation has deteriorated to the point that troops may be required. If we are to commit troops, is the member prepared to see them continue on the aggressive action that has been taken to move all the way to Belgrade and remove President Milosevic? Or is he feeling that the troops should only be committed to alleviate the suffering and the humanitarian need of the refugees that have been displaced?

It would seem to me that we have started the war. We are the ones who have done the bombing, which is a fairly aggressive act. If we are to commit ground troops, are we going to continue on in the same vein of being aggressive toward the Serbian nation, or is the humanitarian relief the focus of committing troops?

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to clarify my own thinking on the subject. If, and I want to underline the little word if, it becomes necessary for NATO to involve troops on the ground, I do not believe we should be entering Serbia proper, Serbia proper meaning excluding Kosovo. We should continue the air offensive there as part of ongoing efforts to shut down Mr. Milosevic's military machine.

The member used the right word. Ground troops, if needed, would be undertaking humanitarian involvement, if it is possible to have a humanitarian military involvement in Kosovo. They would clear space, as I said in my speech, to make room for the Kosovars, the ethnic Albanians, to return to their homes. Our ground action would be limited to Kosovo, to push back or arrest, if we can do that, the military gangs operating in that province.

• (2830 )

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Dewdney—Alouette.

I rise in the early hours of this day to speak to the growing troubles that we now see in Kosovo. The subject of war troubles me very deeply. This is not a topic that I nor I am sure anyone else in the House takes very lightly. Not only are the lives of people in those countries on the line, but indeed Canadian lives are also on the line.

I wish to begin by paying tribute to our troops who are over there. I wish for their personal safety and their safe return home to their loved ones as soon as possible. It is perhaps unfortunate that the government motion did not also include the phrase "the safe return of our Canadian forces personnel". We ought not to forget them at this particular time.

It bothers me greatly, and the Liberal government should be ashamed, that it has taken Canada so far down this path of aggression without any authority from the House of Commons. We are at war and until now have not even debated the issue.

I must ask the simple question: What is our intention in Kosovo? Are we going to attempt to make peace or are we going to be peacemakers when the opportunity arises? Obviously, there is no peace at this time.

Canada has placed the lives of Canadian men and women at great risk. These men and women are prepared to go where we, as the elected officials of their country, ask them to go. Again I must ask the question: What is our intention in Kosovo? What are we asking our men and women to do? When we ask them to do something, are we ensuring that they have the tools to do the job?

The motion that we are debating states:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo—

I have no difficulty in adding my voice of support in the recognition of this terrible situation, but what does take note mean? Are we being asked to recognize the plight of the refugees by assisting them through the provision of food and other basic necessities? If so, then of course the government has my full support.

Are we being asked to right the terrible wrongs that are being forced upon the refugees? I have concerns as to how to go about this and, therefore, whether we should go about this or not. In a region that has known hostilities for over 500 years, is it possible for any of us sitting very safely in this House of parliament to fully understand, know and determine the rights and the wrongs of the situation?

The forceful removal of people from their homes is of course never right. Depriving people of their identification and property is never right. The murder of innocent people is never right.

The motion continues to state:

—and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo—

Like many government motions, this is sufficiently vague enough to mean a lot of different things. If this means sending in ground troops, I am opposed and I have strong concerns. If this means that the Canadian forces will play a role in maintaining the peace, I am willing to support it.

The motion concludes "that leads to the safe return of the refugees". I am also in support of this. I think one of the biggest questions that must be considered with this is what are the refugees going home to. When will we know that the NATO forces have fully achieved their objective and that it is sustainable? How long do we expect our troops to be in Kosovo?

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There was a time when Canadians generally were very proud of our international role in peacekeeping. We sent our troops to some of the most difficult places in the world and we did a good job of keeping warring factions apart; places like Cyprus and the Middle East. We were not involved then in the invasion of a sovereign nation.

However, in the last few years Canadians have begun to view our Canadian Armed Forces in a different light. That is partially due to the inability of the government to clearly articulate to the Canadian people what it believes the military role is.

• (2835)

Because of this indecisiveness, our troops have been underpaid, undermanned and underequipped. They have had to work with obsolete equipment, live in substandard housing and moonlight at other jobs in order to make financial ends meet. Couple this with scandals like the Somalia affair, the treatment of women in the forces and moral is at an all time low.

Throughout this decade and in the midst of all of these circumstances, we persist in sending our troops into no win international situations. Instead of being the peacekeepers of which we can be proud, we are forcing them to be aggressors tainted with the results of killing and wounding innocent civilians.

Let us look at the record. We are part of NATO. In order to fulfill our commitment to this organization, we have been dragged into international conflicts on the coattails of American foreign policy. Let us not make any mistake about it; the Americans are the ones who are pushing these international war operations today. The record is not good.

In the early years of this decade, we sent our airplanes into Kuwait and Iraq as part of the desert storm operation. The goal was to stop Saddam Hussein in his mad long rush to conquer Kuwait and its oil rich territory. However, what really happened? We unleashed all the power of modern warfare against him and when victory was in our grasp and it was possible to eliminate this awful dictator, we stopped on his doorstep, turned our backs and high-tailed it home. Now we wait until he builds up his war machine to continue his terror and seven years later go back in and do it all over again. It does not seem to make any sense.

Either these operations must have clearer objectives that will once and for all destroy the war machines of these madmen dictators, or we do not go in at all and we let history take its course.

We now have a similar situation with Serbia and the madman Milosevic. No one condones his ethnic cleansing of Albanians, but this hatred between the races has been going on for centuries. It will not be changed by the dropping of bombs but by a dramatic change in human hearts.

Once again, what is the objective here? Is it to get rid of Milosevic and his henchmen in order to stop the ethnic cleansing? Do we really think this war against a sovereign nation will change anything? Has U.S. foreign policy determined that it will use the NATO disguise to go so far and then back off only to come in another day or year to flex its muscles again? Are Canadian troops being used as pawns in the hands of the Americans in a war exercise that does not seem to have a clear objective?

What exactly is it that we are trying to achieve? I believe these are importance questions that are being asked by many Canadians. We in this parliament deserve to give them an answer.

In the meantime, Canadians are killing innocent civilians, children and young people. We are bombing non-military targets. I know it is unintentional but it still is happening. War is hell and these things will always happen when we engage our troops in it.

We are committing our sometimes under strength, underpaid, ill-equipped troops to a war that I do not think we can win unless we are prepared to pull out all the stops. We all know the risks of that today. In the nuclear age, we are only just one button push away from world war III, its horrors and the possibility of the end of the human race that this would bring.

Is that what we want our Canadian troops involved in? Not this Canadian. Keep our troops for the time-honoured and world respected role of peacekeepers. Do not turn them into aggressors waging war against civilians. Do not send our army or any ground troops for that matter into this conflict in Kosovo. This is not Kuwait. It is a mountainous country where armies can hole up in the hills for ages fighting guerrilla warfare. The second world war proved this. This conflict would be protracted, ugly and covered with blood and could well take us into world war III.

There has to be a better way. Are there no decent Serbians who know the truth about Milosevic? They cannot tolerate him forever. Could we not expect that they would somehow get rid of him and his henchmen; that truth would prevail and that right would win out? There has to be another option.

I do not believe that what we are doing is the answer. Canadians should not be there in their present role. We are not the policemen of the world. Let us always be known as peacekeepers and peacemakers. Our military reputation is already tarnished in the world community.

Along with many Canadians, I long for the day that is described in the Bible, a day when the lamb lies down with the lion, a day when we shall beat our swords into ploughshares and man will know war no more. Until that day comes, we must work for peace. We must be viewed by the world as peacemakers and not aggressors.

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• (2840)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, regardless of how we got to where we are, I wonder if the member understands that Mr. Milosevic does not appear to be using any normal rules of engagement in this conflict and, in particular, in the efforts of his regime to remove the ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. Would he not agree that it would be in the definition of peacemaking to go into the Kosovo region to arrest or at least push back the gangs, the henchmen of the Milosevic regime who are perpetrating his evil designs?

If there is no agreement in the near future, would the member not agree that it might be reasonable and necessary to use ground troops? Would it not be in the order of peacemaking to arrest or push those henchmen out and make room for the resettlement of the Kosovars in their homeland?

**Mr. Reed Elley:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there are any rules in war. When we get involved in a situation like this anything can happen. We unleash a terror and an evil in the hearts of men that only ends up in the slaughter of many people. That is the lesson of history.

What Canadians have to decide is whether we as a country really want our troops doing that kind of thing. Is that what we want our troops known for? Personally, as a Canadian I do not want our troops to be known in this way. We have a good reputation as peacemakers. We can fulfill our NATO commitments and be the peacemakers. If the other countries of the world want to be aggressors, let them be, but let us not, just for the sake of going along with the crowd, be like everybody else. Let us be peacemakers the way we have been for years.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the debate has certainly gone on for a fairly long time but it is an important debate to have. While we appreciate the opportunity to speak, we wish this was something our country did not have to face.

There certainly has been a variance of opinion. It is good that our members have an opportunity to express their points of view as they reflect the wishes of their constituents and others. We have also heard a wide range of ideas and opinions here.

This debate has sparked a deeper philosophical debate across this country. This occurs when there is an armed conflict where clearly, as in this instance, wrongs are being perpetrated against individuals in another part of the world. It is clear that what Mr. Milosevic is undertaking in Serbia and Kosovo is wrong and that is the basis of this debate tonight.

Individuals across this land are questioning NATO's right to get involved? They are questioning the fact that innocent people are being injured and killed. Yes, that is true. As a member of the

government pointed out not long ago, there are innocent people on both sides of this conflict. Civilians who are trying to live their lives may not be fully aware of the terrible things that are happening in their country.

• (2845)

There are individuals in our country as well who when taking one side or another perhaps have not stopped to fully look at the whole situation and to look at what is involved in this kind of conflict. Historically the conflict in this region has gone on for many hundreds of years. There is deep bitterness and resentment of one side to another. That has continued on.

We are not looking in this debate to solve or to assign blame to that situation because when a wrong has been committed by more than one party then both are in the wrong. There have been atrocities on both sides over the past hundreds of years.

We see a greater wrong being perpetrated now by Mr. Milosevic in the fact that he is killing innocent people. The term ethnic cleansing has been used quite a bit in the media and in this debate. It may be easier for us to talk about that term rather than about the atrocities it represents. Innocent people are being murdered simply because they belong to one particular group or another, because they belong to one religious group or another, because they are a particular minority within that area. That is simply wrong.

We have to stand up when something as wrong as this goes on. The often stated line that evil will flourish if good men do nothing is so true. I believe that to be the case in this situation. If good men and women do nothing, then evil will flourish. We cannot simply stand by and watch this happen a world away.

We may not have intervened in other areas when perhaps we should have. We do not want to second guess that. But we know now and the fact is clear that Mr. Milosevic is doing wrong. It is a clear and simple fact. We must stand to oppose that. That is what we are here to debate today.

We think about the refugees, the over 500,000 individuals who have been displaced from their homes. Even for those refugees there is no going back in the same way after this conflict. There is no going back to their homeland with the same perspective or frame of reference after witnessing the horrors of war that have occurred.

The veterans within our own country who fought in World War II and in other conflicts are never the same people they once were after having engaged in that kind of conflict and having witnessed the kinds of things they have seen. I think of my own father, a veteran of World War II, and how that shaped his perspective. He was never the same person as he was before he participated in that conflict.

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These events are terrible and awful. We would have hoped they had not happened but they have. In order to put an end to them, something needs to be done. Action needs to be taken. For that reason I support the involvement of the NATO forces, not flippantly because I know that in doing so individuals will lose their lives as some have already. It would be my hope and prayer that none of our own personnel would be lost in this.

It is a very deep and heavy question that weighs upon all of us should it come to a point in time where military troops are asked to be deployed in that area of Kosovo to further support the military action being taken. That deep and heavy question weighs on the hearts of all members in this place and a great number of Canadians across this land.

It would be my hope, should the day come where we are faced with the prospect of asking our young men and women to go into an armed conflict on the ground that we would have another debate, a full and open debate in this place and that we would be able to vote on whether or not to do that. I know that is one step further down the road. We do not know if that is going to happen and we hope and pray it does not.

• (2850)

Ultimately it is up to us in this place as the elected representatives of the country to have that debate, to have today's debate and to anticipate a further debate. It is our role as leaders in the country to anticipate events. We do not look ahead blindly, but anticipate the possibility of all eventualities in this kind of conflict.

It is up to us to consult with individuals in our ridings, to ask the hard questions and to look together in a non-partisan way for solutions to this issue particularly because it involves the lives of so many.

It is certainly a question that has been asked of me several times by different people in my own riding and by people on both sides of the issue. There are those who say yes, we should support the NATO actions, and those who say no, we should not. As legislators in this place, we have to weigh all that information. We have to ask those hard questions. We have to direct some hard questions toward the government on this issue.

I was quite surprised earlier today that the Prime Minister seemed to be somewhat reluctant to want to state that we would have a vote should we get to the point of deploying ground troops. I know that in other NATO countries there will be a debate. I cannot see the American forces being sent in without a debate in the congress, if not a debate in the senate. I would hope that would happen here as well.

Ultimately the objective of this NATO action is to stop the wrong, to stop the atrocities that are going on. That is the bottom line and the question that needs to be answered. It is for that reason

we must have this debate. We must support our troops who are there and the NATO decision that has been made at this point regarding the air offensive, again for the reason of stopping the wrong that Mr. Milosevic is perpetrating against his own citizens.

We must stand. If we do not stand, if good men and women will not stand, then evil will continue to flourish. We cannot allow that to happen.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. I appreciate the comments he made.

The question I wish to put to him is well at the top of my own mind. What is the distinction, if any, between peacekeeping and peacemaking? Too many people use those words interchangeably. That is okay. It may be their interpretation of those words, that they are the same, but in my own mind they are different words.

If we go back a couple of thousand years, a great person referred to peacemakers as blessed. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Does the hon. member have an opinion, and I am sure he does, on what distinction, if any, can be made between peacekeeping and peacemaking? Would he agree that peacekeeping comes after peacemaking? When there is an armed standoff in a community or city, before there can be peace to be kept, the police may have to go make some peace. Then they will maintain the peace after.

I think this is where I am coming to in my own thinking on this. In the absence of a decision by Mr. Milosevic to make an agreement, we may have to go and make some peace. That is the essence of our debate. We understand fairly well Canada's role as a peacekeeper. What is Canada's role as a peacemaker?

• (2855)

**Mr. Grant McNally:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is a good question. He is right when he says that first of all peace must be made before we can keep the peace. He has asked about the distinction between peacemaking and peacekeeping.

We have tried to negotiate with Mr. Milosevic for a long period of time. Many people have tried to negotiate peace and it simply has not worked. As a result of that this action has been taken.

In many ways I would agree with my colleague on the government side that yes, we have to have peace before we can maintain the peace. In Mr. Milosevic's case, it seems to be that he will not negotiate. He does not understand or he has a different philosophical perspective about what it means to stop. It seems it is simply forceful actions that will show him, and that is what it will take to stop the atrocities he is perpetrating.

In essence that is what we must continue to do. Then after the fact hopefully a resolution will be found and peacekeeping troops will be deployed as they have been in other areas in that region.

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The member asked a valid and very good question.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when I was elected to represent Lotbinière in the House of Commons on June 2, 1997, I would not have thought that I would be asked to speak in the context of a world conflict.

We all recall operation desert storm in which the UN intervened in 1991 to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

Today, April 13, 1999, at the dawn of the third millennium, another dictator, the Serbian president, is threatening peace, this time in Europe. For more than ten years, the president of Serbia, on pretext of defending the Serb minorities, invaded and fought a war in Bosnia, Croatia and, now, Kosovo.

We will recall the images of the war in Sarajevo the media broadcast to the world at the opening of the Olympic winter games in Lillehammer in 1994. The TV networks, in order to raise world awareness, showed the images of a jubilant people celebrating at the 1984 Olympic winter games.

Ten years later, the traditional fireworks had given way to the fireworks of Serb shelling and the bombs that destroyed 300 historical monuments in Dubrovnik, a city recognized by UNESCO for its historical beauty, and the city of Mostar, which I had the pleasure of visiting in 1988. It was a surprise to the tourists to discover such cultural variety in this lovely corner of the country.

It was impressive to see, in the same skyline, the minaret of a muslim mosque and the steeples of a catholic church and the onion-domed towers of an orthodox cathedral. Bosnians, Croats and Serbs were living together in peace. A few years later, this spectacular city was the target of Serb bombings.

I shudder when I see the images of suffering and destruction in this country, which we have been seeing on TV for the past three weeks. Long lines of Kosovar refugees fleeing their homeland, pursued by Serb soldiers, unfortunately remind us of the horrors of the second world war. Nobody would have thought Europe would have to endure the madness of yet another dictator.

Sixty years later, on the eve of the year 2000, NATO is faced with another warrior president, who harbours much hatred for a whole people, the people of Kosovo.

In 1993, acting in another professional capacity, I had the opportunity to chat with Martin Gray at the launching of one of his books. He told us he feared the worst for the Balkans. The decline of human values and the escalating ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia were of great concern to him.

Referring to the horrors of the second world war he said "I saw men acting like animals, attacking women and children and decimating whole families". Indeed the Kosovars, who are seeing

Serb militiamen with such hatred in their hearts, are living through the same nightmare as Martin Gray and his loved ones.

If there is anyone who can bear witness to genocide, it is Martin Gray. If there is anyone who saw a barbaric army destroy his fellow citizens, it is Martin Gray.

● (2900)

In spite of the messages of this proponent of peace and of the numerous reports reminding us of the atrocities of World War II, we waited. Our military action was limited and we let the Serbian president implement his sinister plan.

Sure, peacekeepers were sent to Bosnia to maintain peace, but it was too late. The damage had been done. Cities and villages had been destroyed. Tens of thousands of civilians had been killed. And yet, President Milosevic is still free.

How could NATO and even the UN have been so tolerant when faced with such a hellish situation? Journalists, military strategists and historians wonder about the effectiveness of NATO's military operation.

How could NATO not see the threat to Kosovars? How could NATO be indirectly responsible for the massive exodus of Kosovars? How could NATO not see the genocide planned by the Serbian president?

While NATO was trying to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Kosovo, the Serbian army was preparing to invade that region. While NATO was threatening Serbia with sanctions, the Serbian army was crossing the Kosovo border. Finally, when NATO began its air strikes against Belgrade and other military targets in Serbia, Serbian troops resorted to force and barbarity to force people to leave Kosovo.

This is the sad scenario that led to the current situation in Kosovo. Yet, NATO, with the support of American and western media, boasted about this military operation and about the merits of its powerful military arsenal, including Canada's F-18's.

The world let out a sigh of relief when the American president, Bill Clinton, announced that air strikes had begun against Serbia. Twenty days later, NATO has still not convinced the Serbian president to listen to reason, Kosovo is empty, and Kosovars are suffering terribly.

NATO countries have made a concerted effort to help the hundreds of thousands of Kosovo refugees who were expelled from their native land by the Serbian army.

But, in the meantime, where do the Serbs stand? The president, his military leaders, and his numerous supporters throughout the world remain unmoved in the face of all this injustice, suffering and human misery.

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And what is Canada doing? It has taken the humanitarian step of opening its borders to Kosovar refugees. Now it must demand that NATO force the Serb president back to the negotiating table and get him to accept the following conditions to right the wrongs done to Kosovo: sign the Rambouillet agreement; pull the Serb army out of Kosovo immediately; facilitate the return of the Kosovars to their homeland; help rebuild Kosovo; and agree to the presence of a peaceful NATO or UN military force.

Enough is enough. NATO must also examine the presence of the Russians in the Kosovo peace process or find a foreign envoy able to stand up to President Milosevic. It must continue its efforts to liberate Kosovo and once again reason with the current president of Serbia who, in addition to persecuting the Kosovars, is using this war to increase his popularity among his fellow Serbs. Once the war is over, Milosevic will be accountable to humanity.

NATO must not repeat the mistake made by the UN in 1991 when it decided not to arrest President Saddam Hussein. Everyone knows what happened next. NATO must therefore step up the air strikes until the Serb president puts out a white flag.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his remarks. He gave an excellent synopsis of some of the more recent history and certainly laid out a desirable plan for all of us to consider.

• (2905)

If all attempts to get Mr. Milosevic to the negotiating table fail and if it appears that he will not negotiate or agree to anything because he has some sort of national death wish, would the member agree that it may be necessary for ground troops to enter the Kosovo region and not Serbia proper to arrest those who are perpetrating horrific crimes against ethnic Albanians? Ultimately, if there is a war crimes tribunal, many of the accused will be or will have been in the Kosovo region

Would the member agree that while the air campaign is ongoing it may be necessary to enter Kosovo to arrest and push back Milosevic's henchmen to create room for the return of the refugees? Would he consider that might be a possibility?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks.

When NATO decided to intervene with the air strikes, it may have been a bit off in its estimate of how long it would take to annihilate the Serbian military forces.

Judging from televised reports, the context in Kosovo is one of a small mountainous province with very winding roads. The Serbs know Kosovo well, as they have now been there close to a year.

If we are thinking of sending over ground forces, we will need to be sure there are good guides available. We must be sure that these forces are able to make the Serbian president see reason.

I believe that, at present, NATO has taken the right steps by wanting to weaken the military arsenal of the Serbian president. If I understand the historical situation properly, Serbia currently possesses the military arsenal of the former Yugoslavia.

Members will recall that, when Yugoslavia broke up after the demise of Tito, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina became independent and Serbia, taking advantage of its military arsenal and all the military might it had at its disposal, began to attack Croatia and Bosnia. Now it is Kosovo's turn.

This is more than a question of conflict. It is a question of a man making use of his power, a man with no respect for democracy, and particularly no respect for the people with whom he lives.

I have already spoken of the time I spent in Mostar, and how impressed I was to see so many cultures cohabiting. Now, however, the President of Serbia has decided, under the pretext of false nationalism, to change the rules of the game.

If ground forces have to be sent in, Canada will definitely have to play a leadership role so that the co-operative effort will be more seriously planned than the improvisation that has been going on since the conflict began.

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is 5:07 a.m. this Tuesday morning, and I want to say things a number of members are thinking, which we have discussed among ourselves, but which have yet to be included in the debate.

First, the members of the House are not better informed about the situation in Kosovo than the average citizen who reads the papers and watches TV. I am here at the moment to debate an important issue and, despite the fact that I am a member of parliament, the information I have is no different than that available to the public in the papers or on radio and television.

• (2910)

As a member, and this is the case with all the members in this House, I did not have access to specific information. I was not better informed. I do not know whether the government agrees or disagrees with the information the media provide.

The media, with the best of intentions, do not always carry all of the information available and do not always present it from all angles.

I am no better informed than the ordinary citizen in Quebec and Canada, and it is this context that I must use my judgment to express my viewpoint.

This brings me to the second issue. I will express my opinion, but what will come of it? Will it allow my colleagues in this House to support some of my views, to oppose them, to complete them, or to improve them so that we can make a better decision? In other words, will my comments help the House make a better decision? The answer is no, because no decision will be made.

At the conclusion of this debate, there will be no vote, no decision. The decision has already been made by the government.

What am I doing here at ten past five in the morning? I am not happy. I am not happy about the way the government is treating the members of this House. There are 301 members of parliament. We represent Quebeckers and Canadians. We do our best to make a positive and constructive contribution to the business of this House, particularly today with the issue of Kosovo. Under the circumstances, I feel very useless and, unfortunately, not very knowledgeable.

Still, I realize that the Prime Minister wants to avoid a vote that might show the international community, and particularly Milosevic, that we do not stand united on this issue.

The result of this could be very different, because we are sending the message that our Prime Minister is so unsure about us being united, so insecure about the current situation, that he will not even ask this House to vote to support the positions that he is proposing to the international community.

There is a danger that the Prime Minister's decision will have exactly the opposite effect. Rather than presenting a united front, he is going to make people think there is a lack of unity when, in fact, that is not the case.

The situation in Kosovo is tragic. Kosovo is about the same size as the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area. It is not very large. It consists of a plain surrounded by mountains, like the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area, and is home to 2.5 million people. Coming from the North, the Serbs, led by Milosevic—and I would like to say in passing that I firmly believe that the Serbs are as honest as anyone else on the planet—have received the order to expel the residents of Kosovo from their territory.

• (2915)

Let us imagine for a moment what is happening. We are in our home, with our furniture, our belongings and our memories. We are sitting in front of our television when there is knock at our door and someone yells that we are to gather up our things and leave the country. That is what is happening.

Right now, one quarter of the population—approximately 600,000 people, if we are to believe the electronic media—have

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already been forced to leave, under terrible conditions, and cross a mountain range with winter barely over.

It is not known how many people have died so far. It is not known how many have been wounded. It is not known how many families have been split up. Nobody knows how many children died. Nobody knows how many old people were left behind.

We are faced with an absolutely tragic situation I would compare to the following one: suppose we have neighbours who are experiencing family problems and they are quarrelling. Through closed doors and windows we can hear voices getting louder. We might try mediating and bring things back to normal.

But if we hear gun shots, it is time to call the police and bring in the tactical team to prevent a disaster. Things have gone far enough.

This is what the current situation is like. For ten years now there has been negotiations. They are leading nowhere, they are deadlocked. People are dying. Is the death toll 1,000, 10,000, 100,000? We do not know for sure. I am in the dark. But one thing is certain, we must intervene and do so on several fronts.

First, we must provide shelter for the refugees, particularly in neighbouring countries such as Macedonia and Albania. These countries are poor and do not have the means to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are streaming in day after day. Therefore we have to provide them with what is required in terms of infrastructure, food supplies, health care and drugs to ensure these people are taken care of.

This will not be short term. It will be a long time before the refugees can go back home, if there is anything to go back to. We hear on the news that their houses were burned down.

The first step to be considered is receiving the refugees. Then, making it possible for them to go home. This will not be possible unless Milosevic and the people around him can be made to see reason. This is precisely the purpose of the air strikes, to ensure that the Serbs realize that there is a price to pay for their actions, a price that will make them less and less able to continue what they are doing.

The day will come when, if we want the Kosovars to return to their country, support will have to be provided to them for reconstruction and to ensure their safety. So troops to ensure security will not be the only ones that will have to be sent; engineers will be needed as well. Social workers will be needed, doctors, people who will help the Kosovars rebuild what Milosevic and his army have destroyed.

We are faced with an extremely delicate and extremely complex problem. I truly regret that the government did not inform MPs more fully on this entire situation and the issues involved. I would

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be better able to form a clear judgment. With a better understanding of the issues, I would be able to make a better contribution to this debate.

I regret that this debate is, to all intents and purposes, only a show. We are giving the Canadian public the impression that we are profoundly reflecting on the matter in order to reach the best decision. That is not the case. We are reflecting. We are reacting, but the decision is not ours. It is out of our hands.

● (2920)

We are denied this democratic right we enjoy in the name of those we represent to take part in decisions. We have no part in them. That seems totally unfair.

I will return to the situation in Kosovo. At the moment, this country—which is the size, as I mentioned, of the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region—is being shot up and bloodied by the Serbs. Why are the Serb troops doing that? Is it because they are inherently wicked? We have to really understand how an army works. As I was saying, the Serbs are decent and good people. But when people are in the army, they follow orders, and if they do not, they pay the price and, generally, in times of war, it is with their life.

At the moment, Serb troops are being ordered to fire on and bloody Kosovo. This country, the size of the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, is hemmed in by mountains, village after village, city after city, street after street and neighbourhood after neighbourhood. The people are of Albanian origin, but have lived in Kosovo for centuries and are being expelled and pushed toward the borders. Some travel in vehicles, others take the train—and the media have showed us unbearable hardship—while others walk along the railroad tracks.

At this point, we are definitely in no position to intervene in Kosovo itself to help people migrate. We have to wait for them at the border. However, we have learned that access to the border has now been denied. What does this mean for Kosovars? It means they can no longer use roads to get to a neighbouring country. They must walk through the forest, through the woods, and while this is spring, nights can still be quite cold in the mountains.

In the hours and days to come, it is critical that energetic action be taken to welcome these refugees in Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, which are Kosovo's neighbours.

Of course, this will require money and also some means of transport to bring in supplies. What role can Canada play? Our air force can bomb Serbian positions inside Serbia. But we must participate in the humanitarian effort to help the refugees. The fact is that Canadian forces have a great deal of experience in humanitarian missions.

Before there can be any thought of peacekeeping in Kosovo—this is not for tomorrow, and people should realize this—there is the humanitarian mission of taking in refugees, which is where I am sure our troops could play a role, ensuring the provision of sanitary conditions and food and, as we are seeing on television, educational facilities for the youngest, so that they are treated with respect and dignity while waiting to be able to return to their own country.

Although Canada, the United States and other countries thought they would be able to take in refugees one, one and a half or two weeks ago, the situation has now degenerated and has taken a completely different turn. One or two weeks ago, it was thought that there would be a hundred thousand refugees to take in, and that the majority of Kosovars would remain in Kosovo.

● (2925)

But now, all that has changed. The entire population is being driven out of Kosovo. It would therefore be completely unthinkable and unacceptable to have these refugees rebuild their lives elsewhere in the world and completely abandon their country. This would be an admission that Milosevic was right to do what he has done, to drive everyone out of Kosovo. It would signify approval of this massive expatriation of all inhabitants of Kosovo.

It is therefore imperative that Kosovars be provided with decent accommodation in the countries bordering on Kosovo, thus guaranteeing two things: first, it will show Milosevic that we are going to do what it takes to enable these people to return home, if their homes are still standing and, if they are not, that we are going to help them rebuild; second, it will show the Kosovar refugees that they can count on the international community to help them return to their homes.

It is late and I know that other members would also like to speak, so I will stop here.

[English]

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to ask a question of my colleague and friend, the member for Portneuf.

He made a number of excellent comments. Early in his remarks he wondered why he was participating in this debate. He was lamenting the fact that it will not conclude with a vote. He wondered if this was all a masquerade.

As I listened to his comments he proved to me that he did deserve to be here and to make these comments. Listening to him I learned something, as I am sure others in the House and those watching did. Indeed, he has proven the opposite of his point. In fact his contributions this morning have been very valuable to the



discussion, notwithstanding that at the end of the day there may or may not be a vote. In this case there will not be a vote.

I would like to ask him a question which relates to getting from *A* to *B*. He talked eloquently. He brought me right into the home of an ethnic Albanian in Kosovo who was watching television, heard a knock at the door and was asked to move out within 10 minutes. That is an experience that none of us, I am sure, have ever had and hopefully will never have. It is difficult to imagine. However, by imagining it, it is possible to feel the moment of terror and tragedy which those families suffered.

Does he believe, should President Milosevic never agree to some terms of settling the conflict, that it may be necessary for NATO and Canada as a participant to involve ground troops in order to make peace in that region? Does he believe that Milosevic and his thugs should be arrested so that the international criminal court can deal with them and make room for the Kosovars to return to their homes? They will not be able to move back unless there is peaceful space for them.

If there is yet no agreement, does he think today that it might be necessary to send in ground troops to make space for the refugees to return to their homes?

• (2930)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, before answering the question from the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin, I would like to comment his statement to the effect that I contradict myself by saying that this debate is useless when I am making a contribution he described as useful.

I am happy to know what I said was useful. However, I did not become a member of parliament to be a lecturer. I used to be a teacher, and the transfer of knowledge was my job. I was paid to do that. Now I am a member of parliament, and my job is to take part in the decision making process. That is not what I am being asked to do today.

I hope that my contribution is useful. Otherwise I would not have risen so early to come here and make my presentation, but that is not what I am paid to do. I am paid to take part in the decision making process. What upsets me is that fact that I am not allowed to do my job. My constituents do not expect me to come here just to make speeches. They expect me to take action and to make decisions, but that is not what I am doing today.

To answer the question from my colleague, this conflict will necessarily end one day, because no conflict is eternal, but for peace to be lasting, it will have to be the result of negotiations.

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That is how things are done in labour relations. The same applies to international relations. The parties must come to an agreement, which agreement can only be achieved through negotiations.

In work relations, when negotiations become difficult, pressure tactics are taken. People work to rule or go on strike. In international affairs, when negotiations become more difficult or stall completely, we turn to the diplomacy of arms.

A day will come when parties will have to sit together, negotiate and reach an agreement. In the meantime, will we have to complement air strikes with ground operations? Maybe, maybe not. I have, to date, absolutely no information that would allow me to know for sure. I am left in total darkness as are all members. I cannot give my colleague an answer on this specific aspect of his question.

However, as I said earlier, when an agreement is reached between the parties, two things will have to be done: Ensure security in the region with a peacekeeping force and provide technical support by sending in engineers, workers specialized in various fields and doctors to help Kosovo rebuild and heal.

That is all I can say given the information I have and, much more so, the information I do not have.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Portneuf has painted a very clear picture of the situation in Serbia and Kosovo for us. However, he reminded us that the Liberal government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, will unfortunately deny this House the possibility to vote at the end of this long debate, which started at 3 p.m. yesterday and will be than 10 hours long by the time it is over.

The five parties in the House support air strikes and the actions taken by the Canadian government. Could the hon. member for Portneuf risk an explanation of that situation? Could he explain why the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence would categorically refuse the hon. members who represent all Canadians an opportunity to vote on the Canadian involvement in the conflict?

• (2935)

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Prime Minister has in mind, and I would be hard pressed to guess what it is.

But I can say I am offended that I am not allowed to fulfill decently my duty as a member of the House by making an enlightened contribution to the government's decisions. I am not allowed to fulfill my duty at all or decently, because I am not given the information I need and because I am denied the opportunity to vote.

I can tell the House I am for a motion during the debate, but the real decision is made when I stand in my place and vote for the

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motion that is before the House. In this case, I am not allowed to take a stand on behalf of my constituents of Portneuf. I am not allowed to do the work I am paid for.

Today, everything is fine, and we all agree with the Prime Minister that we should go. There is no disagreement between various parties in the House, and there is none between the government and the opposition parties. We all agree. Everything is fine. We do not have the right to express our support through a vote, but since we all agree on this, we are probably not really angry.

Let us imagine the opposite situation, where we would disagree and the government would not allow us to vote. Obviously, democracy would be thwarted. I happen to think that if it is thwarted when we disagree, it is also when we are in agreement and are denied the opportunity to vote. That is the point I wanted to make.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I should indicate at the outset that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

At this early hour in the morning when the people in my constituency will just be getting up I first want to thank the many Canadians who have written, e-mailed and phoned my office in the last few weeks to express their concerns about this country's engagement in Yugoslavia.

I also want to thank in particular my constituents in the riding of Sydney—Victoria who over the Easter break contacted me or whom I contacted to discuss their views on this most important issue. Their deliberations and opinions are crucial to the debate we are having here in the wee hours of the morning.

I can say that the vast majority of constituents who spoke with me supported at the end of March the position of NATO and agreed with the New Democratic Party policy to support the government on this alternative before the House adjourned.

However, like us in the New Democratic Party, they did so cautiously and they did so warily. They still may do so on humanitarian grounds, but they do so quietly and soberly without jingoism and without blind patriotism.

We know that the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia has a long history of struggle. Like many nations in the Baltic region its history is both rich and complex. To understand the events of the last few months we must understand the complex struggles in this region of the world.

The majority of the population in Kosovo is Albanian. In 1985 I think Kosovo held one-third of the entire Albanian population in

the world. While rich agriculturally the area has long been among the poorest regions of Yugoslavia.

The Albanians have a claim to this property and it is important to understand the backdrop here. They claim that they settled Kosovo in the middle of the second millennium BC.

• (2940 )

However the Serbs view Kosovo as the cradle of the Serbian empire. It was in that territory, and we have heard this in many debates in the House, that the Serbs were defeated by the Turks on the Plain of Blackbirds in 1389. This is sacred territory to the Serbs.

In 1913 Kosovo became part of Yugoslavia. It is important to remember that during the second world war Kosovo was occupied by Italy. During the second world war it is the claim of Albania that the nationalists clearly expressed the view that Kosovo be allowed to exercise the right of self-determination when the war ended.

In 1945 following the second world war there was a nationalist uprising in Kosovo against reimposition of Serbian rule. This was crushed and there were many casualties.

There is no question that since Tito has died the residents of Kosovo, and particularly the ethnic Albanians, have been harshly treated. In 1981 unemployment in Kosovo stood at 27.5% and the standard of living in Kosovo was one quarter that of the Yugoslav national average and was falling. It was no wonder that rioting occurred in 1981 and there were many deaths. There was violence again in Pristina in 1989 when ethnic Albanians demonstrated.

As in all conflicts there are faults on both sides. Some writers have pointed to evidence of hypocrisies committed by ethnic Albanians against the Serbian minority in that province. There are arguments that anti-Serb text and literature flow to Kosovo through Albania.

There is evidence that while in the autonomous province within the second Yugoslavia the Serb minority felt its human rights were violated. This built anger upon anger, hatred upon hatred. In fact it was the feeling of mistreatment by the Serbian minority in Kosovo that allowed President Milosevic to pole vault to political power when he promised to assuage and avenge those perceived wrongs.

Since Serbian control there are some issues that we have to look at. In 1991 Serbia ordered the schools in Kosovo to be segregated between Albanians and Serbs. Some 6,000 ethnic Albanian teachers lost their jobs. By 1992 at least 100,000 Albanians had lost their public sector jobs, including 800 of Pristina's 900 academics.

In March 1999, 40,000 Serb troops began a campaign of what is called ethnic cleansing. We know that villages were burned and that 2,000 people had been killed before NATO began to move in.

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The fragile situation in Kosovo is as complex as that in the Middle East or Northern Ireland. It is against that backdrop that we must set the events of the last few months.

The international community had tried to mediate the dispute between these two people in the wake of what had been dramatic changes in eastern Europe in the last decade. It is our responsibility as signators to the United Nations Convention on Human Rights as a privileged nation and as fellow world citizens to assist in the solving of human rights crises and to avert potential human rights atrocities.

Diplomatic efforts had been exhausted. The Serbian president refused to sign the Rambouillet agreement. It is alleged that he refused to cease gross violations of human rights that may well border on genocide. He refused to allow the international war crimes prosecutor, Canadian judge Louise Arbour, to investigate those allegations.

We could simply no longer wait to assist those who were being persecuted. We could no longer wait to see what happened as the tide of events engulfed Albanians and the rest of the world. It was time for action and Canada responded, but we responded with regret. We responded with concern while we responded with action.

We will continue to respond with determination and conviction and we will honour our international obligations. Canadians will keep their word. That is why this party some time ago supported NATO's position regarding selective bombings.

Events in war do not follow nice, normal time lines. Circumstances today are not as they were two weeks ago.

● (2945 )

We are not even close to a resolution of this terrible tragedy. Even as we speak tonight there are reports of a train being bombed in Serbia. There are reports that the French president has softened that country's position and has moved more in line with the position of our leader of the New Democratic Party, who this morning called for the United Nations to play a more integral role in settling this situation.

Circumstances in war change quickly. To find peace in any conflict requires an opportunity for the enemies to negotiate and the proper forum for these talks must be the United Nations. That is why we have advocated that Canada call for a special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Since this issue was last debated in the House the secretary general has set terms and conditions for Yugoslavia to meet to form the basis of a ceasefire. We think that Canada and NATO should call on President Milosevic to stop the war on the ground, to leave the killing fields and to agree to negotiate. If he does that, we in this party argue for the air raids to be suspended for a period of time and for Kofi Annan's terms to form the stage on which a settlement

could be negotiated. This is a necessary requirement for the Serbian president's redemption.

We want peace to be restored and we want it to be restored with justice and with respect for human rights. This party has never and does not support unilateral intervention into another nation's concerns. However, if we have learned anything in this century, surely it is that the human condition is so fragile that we all have a role to play in the protection of the essential human rights of humanity.

Elie Wiesel said: "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference". In 1999 we can no longer afford to be indifferent to the fate of those with whom we share the world. It is not in their interest and it is not in ours.

Hence we call for a new international order. We can only seek peace if we are prepared to be as aggressive in our diplomatic efforts as we are in our military action.

I have not spoken of ground troops in this debate. I will wait until there is a debate and a vote in the House on that issue. Democracy demands as much.

Canadians responded with generosity and compassion toward the refugee crisis and we will need more of that in what I see as a lengthy ordeal in the Balkans.

Finally, I want to assure those Canadians who serve our country in both military service and humanitarian efforts that they are in our thoughts. My constituents and I pray for their safety and for their families. We pray too for the Albanians and the Serbs and we pray for peace.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Kosovo has drawn the attention of the world. No matter where we live in Canada we have watched on television and we have read in the newspapers the horrors and the atrocities, the violations of human rights that have taken place in Kosovo against Muslim Albanians.

In the past two weeks in my riding of Vancouver East I have been overwhelmed by the response that I have received over the telephone, by mail, e-mail, faxes and from people I have met on the street. The response I have had in my own community has been on a couple of levels. First, there has been the response that we have all seen in the House of Commons, across Canada and indeed around the world. That has been the response of: What can we do to stop this violence? What can we do to provide a humanitarian effort to ensure that the Albanians of Kosovo are not violated further?

From my constituents I have also heard another very thoughtful response. It concerns the question of what is the appropriate role and what is it that Canada should do as part of the international community to ensure that there is a just peace in the Balkans and in particular in Kosovo.

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• (2950)

I have been very gratified by the amount of debate that has taken place regarding what Canada's role should be. Many of my constituents have expressed very grave concerns about the fact that Canada has participated in a NATO action that has escalated into military intervention.

Twenty days ago all political parties in the House, including the NDP, supported that intervention because we believed that it was necessary to provide a humanitarian response to the atrocities that were taking place.

However, here we are twenty days later and I think we have to say that the situation has changed. Twenty days ago there was an assurance, a prediction, that the NATO initiative would be short and effective and that its objective was to protect the Kosovars.

This debate has gone on for many hours. We are approaching early morning. Although we will not be voting, today is the time to take stock, to pause for a moment, even in terms of our Canadian contact, to say "What is Canada doing? What has our response been? Is it still the appropriate response?"

The situation has changed. Rather than the situation being contained, which we were told was the objective of NATO, in actual fact the situation has worsened. The bombing has provoked a horrific number of atrocities and a greater fleeing of refugees. Over 500,000 refugees have fled Kosovar.

The bombing has caused untold harm, suffering and death to civilian populations. It is very important to point out that in today's wars—and this is a war, let us make no mistake about it—it is the civilian populations who are the primary casualties. Even though we are told that there is strategic bombing, it is still the civilians who pay the price.

We were told that this would be effective, but we now face the very real danger and threat of the situation escalating. As I and people in my community of Vancouver East watch the news, we watch with a sense of anxiety and stress. We see this drama in the Balkans playing out with Russia particularly, as well as China, becoming involved and making various threats. The whole situation is becoming destabilized.

In today's debate and certainly in our discussions in caucus we believe that we must have the courage to stand and examine what solutions are going to provide a humanitarian, peaceful and just solution in Kosovo and in the Balkans.

We have to ask ourselves if the continued bombing of the people of Serbia and the continued fleeing of refugees is bringing any stability to the area. Evidence is mounting that the contrary is

happening. There is greater instability, greater harm is being done and the NATO initiative is leading us into a situation that is more and more volatile and tense.

People in the peace movement have suggested and predicted that because NATO went in without the authority of the United Nations the very issue of NATO itself has become one of credibility. We went in with a massive force, we issued an ultimatum and then it became very hard to back down, rather than seeking out other resolutions that would bring peace to the area.

Our caucus has had very serious and thoughtful debates about what it is we should be bringing forward to this House of Commons, what we should be saying on behalf of our constituents. We believe very strongly that in terms of what Canada does at this point we should be emphasizing and moving back to a role within the United Nations, a role within international peacekeeping forces, which includes Russia, the OSCE and China. Otherwise we run the huge risk and danger of having the situation worsen daily and we will see the NATO objectives failing.

• (2955)

One of the major peace organizations in British Columbia, End the Arms Race, whose members are expert in the areas of international law, peacekeeping and conflict, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister expressing their opinion that Canada has failed the United Nations. They said that the unilateral military action of NATO has further undermined the authority of the United Nations, the new international court of justice and other UN bodies, and that Canada has contributed to international anarchy by demonstrating that international politics is not governed by law, but by military power.

Those are very sobering words. I urge members of the House to take stock of what is taking place and to recognize that, yes, we must have a humanitarian response, but we are also allowing a crisis to develop in the role of the UN and how the international community responds, not just to the situation in Kosovo, but elsewhere.

We only have to look around the globe at the situation in the Congo, which is a bloody civil war, at the Kurds in Turkey, at the Great Lakes region of Africa, at Sierra Leone, Indonesia or East Timor. There are very fundamental issues about how it is that we strengthen international law, how we protect human rights and how we use the role of the UN as a catalyst to facilitate peacekeeping and the protection of human rights, rather than using NATO as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy to further its own interests.

There is a huge concern growing about the further escalation of the war in Kosovo and whether we have met the humanitarian objectives which we started with 20 days ago. Now we have the contemplation of the possible use of Canadian ground troops, with no assurance from the government that it will be done through a democratic vote in the House of Commons.

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I think it is time to say that we want to see an end to the bombing. We want to see a serious pursuit of diplomacy and not the rejection of every diplomatic overture from Russia or other countries. We want to see a serious negotiation take place under the auspices of the UN. We want to see an international peacekeeping force and, very importantly, an international system under the auspices of the general assembly, after a debate in the general assembly, to adjudicate and make decisions about the use of peacekeeping forces.

Also I think we want to see a commitment that other atrocities, often perpetrated or abetted to serve U.S. interests, receive the same kind of attention. There is an issue of consistency here. The media have drawn our attention to what happens in Kosovo, but we have to be aware of other situations that also demand that kind of response from the international community.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Vancouver East for her comments and those of her colleague from Sydney—Victoria.

I have been listening with interest to members of the New Democratic caucus throughout this debate articulate an interesting and I am sure heartfelt position, but I must admit that from time to time I become confused about exactly what their position is. It seems to be to proceed with the air war if necessary, but do not necessarily proceed with the air war; to stop the bombing in order to have negotiations, but to continue bombing in order to force negotiations.

Therefore, I say with all sincerity that I am not entirely clear as to what policy the NDP is recommending that we and our NATO allies follow. Is it to disengage from the air campaign immediately in the hope that Milosevic will come to the bargaining table, or is it to proceed with the air campaign in the hope that he will come to the bargaining table? Which is it? It certainly cannot be both at the same time.

• (3000)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments. Throughout the debate today and certainly in question period the leader of the NDP; our foreign affairs critic, the member for Burnaby—Douglas; and all of us who have spoken in the debate have made it very clear that we believe the debate today is an opportunity for us to assess the position that has been taken by all political parties and what we should do now and in the future.

I reiterate we are hugely concerned that after 20 days of bombing we appear to be no further ahead in terms of achieving the objectives of how NATO was sent in, in the first place. We believe that through the United Nations, through a special meeting of the general assembly, we should be issuing a call to Mr. Milosevic to

end his ground war, to come back to the table, and to pursue diplomacy and negotiations. On that basis bombing should be halted.

We should take this time to say that if we are serious about negotiations there are choices within that. The peace accord from Rambouillet is something that is probably now off the table. We only have to look at what happened in Northern Ireland to know that if there is a commitment to make it work a very real and genuine course can be followed.

In response to the member, that is what we in the New Democratic Party want to see emphasized. We believe now is the time to increase that effort from the UN and to have the international community, including very strategic players in terms of Russia and China or other interests in the Balkan area, be part of that initiative so that we do not lose an opportunity to give negotiation and diplomacy a chance.

What is the alternative? It is to issue other ultimatums and to keep up the bombing. I would ask a question of the member. Can we seriously and legitimately say that we have achieved the objective that was laid out to us 20 days ago? I think not.

**Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much that I will be using all the time that is available to me but I want to make a number of points. I have not been able to take in all of the debate so some of them may be a repeat of points already made. They are important in terms of my constituents and my own personal feelings on this issue.

The last exchange between the members of Reform and NDP on the question of where people are on this issue was somewhat confusing. That should not be a surprise to anybody. Ultimately that represents the terrible angst we all feel given the fact that atrocities are being perpetrated and have been perpetrated for many years which are inconsistent with what I consider to be Canadian values.

I do not mean to claim ownership of those values, but as Canadians we can take pride in our history of humanitarianism and in our values of civility, tolerance and respectful co-existence. The things that have been happening offend those values. Consequently we all struggle not with the resolution or the objectives as we refer to them but with how to achieve those objectives.

I do not think anybody should imagine that anybody is participating in this exercise with any pleasure. The reality is that we probably all want the same objective achieved. I think we all want the same outcome and we will debate how to achieve it.

From time to time we will struggle with that debate. We will struggle with the question of when it is appropriate, if ever. I am sure there are those in the House who are absolutely pacifist in their view of the world. I am not one of those. I consider myself to be a

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pacifist but I can imagine circumstances where I would feel compelled to act in the defence of those values.

• (3005)

Last weekend in my riding we commemorated the Holocaust. One has to realize that there are occasions from time to time when people of good will and civility need to take an action. I do not want to draw a parallel here, but I am simply saying that there are occasions when it would be appropriate.

The point is that the kind of difficulty people have with this debate simply reflects that. This is not about what we want. I caution everybody to avoid language which suggests that somehow there is a moral high ground here. We all want the same thing. We all want the atrocities to stop.

It is just as difficult for me to say this is an occasion when force may be used as it would be for others to say this is not an occasion where force can be used and struggle with that, with what that means to the people of Kosovo who will be there if we are not. This is a very difficult debate. I would appeal to everybody for the use of language that respects the fact that this is difficult for everybody.

There are many people who are on the ground. I think of the people who are actively involved in the NGOs. The language we use has to be respectful of them, the people who are involved. I was engaged in debates at other times in my life. I think back on the things I said about people who were engaged in acts of war and the language I used. I regret it in some cases. People are generally of good will and I would hope that people in the military would not interpret anything that is said as not being respectful of the actions being taken on their part, the bravery and the sacrifice.

I come from a constituency that has a large military base. I know what it means for families who send members off to foreign places far away. In many cases I will receive a letter or a phone call from a kid or spouse asking me as a member of parliament what this is all about while their father or mother is in Bosnia, Haiti or wherever they may be participating. We need to be respectful of their actions and be prudent in our use of language out of respect for them.

It is also important for Canadians to understand that we share similar objectives. I remember the member from Vancouver saying the difficulty was that we would not be able to argue that the objectives had been achieved. That is true. Of course we would not. If the objectives had been achieved we would not be there and the killing would stop.

However, that does not change what the original objectives were. All we are asking now is whether this is the best course to achieve them. We will have trouble with it. Everybody will have trouble with it.

If we decide we should not be doing it, that we will have trouble with it, what are the possible consequences? What would we be allowing that we should not as a civilized country? If we do it, are we not exacerbating it? Are we not making it worse? Are we not doing something that in our minds as Canadians is probably quite unfamiliar to us as a country and people?

It is important for everybody to ultimately cling to the fact that we are all after the same outcome. Regardless of where we fall in the spectrum of how to achieve it, there is not a member of the House who does not want the same thing as me. The terrible things that are happening to the Kosovars and the terrible atrocities being perpetrated in the name of some ethnic objective should cease. They are wrong and as a civilized country we need to say so.

• (3010)

I take the points made by members opposite. We need to do everything in our power not to allow this presently employed strategy to somehow blind us to the fact that we should be pursuing other strategies either independent of this one or at the very least concurrent with this one. It may be extremely difficult to have the outcome we want. We cannot become lazy in our civility, in our attempts to achieve the same outcome in more peaceful ways.

We should involve all people of goodwill, notwithstanding the fact that the action is specific to NATO. There are countries which may not even support what NATO is doing in this instance but would be helpful in terms of bringing a solution through other means. Every effort needs to be made by our country and the other countries involved to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible.

I never suffered any illusion that this would be easy or quick. How do we achieve the outcome we would want to achieve? In 1993, the year that I first sought office, I was challenged for the nomination of my party. In the debate that took place in that nomination exercise one of the first questions I received was about what I would do as a member of parliament to deal with the ethnic cleansing being undertaken in the former Yugoslavia. This issue has been there for a long time. We have had a number of debates about it here. We have unsuccessfully attempted in a number of ways to bring forward other types of solutions that are perhaps more familiar to Canadians.

The government has decided that the time has come, in collaboration with NATO allies, to take this rather drastic, unpleasant and unwanted course of action simply because the other efforts have not been successful.

I have a great deal of difficulty and have felt terrible even considering what is happening. I also felt terrible considering what was happening before. It becomes very difficult. If it seems that we are not able to give precision in our answers or to articulate our

position with any precision, it is simply by virtue of the fact that as human beings these kinds of decisions do not come easily.

Everyone in the House, regardless of where they may come down in the debate on how to accomplish it, wants the same end. They want to end the atrocities we know have been occurring in the region with haste.

I have great regard for all members who brought forward their personal views. I hope we can be prudent in our use of language, recognizing with respect each person's personal struggle with this issue.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby.

For the third time in this century there is war in Europe. Eighty years ago we brought the war in Europe which we thought was the war to end all wars to an end. It was not the war to end all wars. Twenty years later the war that claimed more lives than any other war in the entire history of the world also commenced in Europe.

• (3015)

The history of Canada is replete with stories of Canadian valour, bravery and personal commitment in the face of danger during these wars. When it comes to war in this century, Canada has stood side by side with the great and mighty nations. Now we have a conflagration in the Balkans that was easy to start but perhaps could prove difficult to finish.

Perhaps we have lost sight of the fine distinction between making war and making peace. In the last 40 years Canada has carved out its role as a peacemaker. Lester B. Pearson, our Prime Minister who won the Nobel peace prize, sent our Canadian troops to the Suez Canal not to make war but to make peace. Since that day Canada has played a leading role as a peacemaker deploying our armed forces in many places around the world.

Through our active role in peacemaking we can say that tens of thousands of civilians are living peacefully today in what were once trouble spots where ethnic cleansing could have been implemented before it became the buzzword to describe the military activity in the Balkans.

But the Balkans are living up to their historic reputation of small statehoods whose hatred and enmity of each other far exceed their desire to live in harmony and peace. Upon the ascent of Slobodan Milosevic to power in 1989, the Balkans have slipped inexorably into the morass of ethnic division, animosity and now slaughter.

If ever there was a need for peacekeeping, it is right now in the Balkans. We feel that we have contained the fighting in Bosnia and now supervise an uneasy peace there. Now we are faced with the

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rape, murder and displacement of tens of thousands of innocent Kosovar Albanian civilians whose only crime is to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The wrong place is their very own homes and villages where they have lived for generations. The wrong time is when a Serbian nationalist is bent on ensuring that his ethnic group, the Serbians, are no longer a minority in what he perceives to be their country of Kosovo and Serbia.

The human tragedy unfolding in that region is beyond our ability to comprehend. That is why I endorse Canada's position that we have a humanitarian obligation to protect the lives of innocent civilians in the Balkans today. It is an affront to our civilized society to watch what is happening. We cannot stand idly by.

There is a difference between making peace and making war. There is a difference between helping innocent civilians unarmed and defenceless to remain in their own homes and villages to live free of the threat of imminent rape, murder and displacement, to live free from the notion that their homes and livelihoods could be destroyed before their very eyes, free from the fear that their families could be scattered in some cases with no hope of being reunited. There is a difference between helping innocent people and attacking a government which has not exhibited territorial ambitions or shown any desire to expand beyond its present boundaries.

In the name of keeping the peace, NATO has gone to war. In the name of saving people's lives, NATO has started killing people. In the name of protecting the homeland of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, we are destroying the homeland of the people in Serbia.

We in Canada live by the rule of law. While I understand the human emotion that caused us to carry the war to the front door of Slobodan Milosevic, it already seems to be a dubious strategy. For months we have threatened Milosevic with bombs if he did not recognize the Kosovars' right to live in peace. When he agreed to our demands, we relaxed the threat of bombing him into submission. When he reneged on his commitments, we reiterated our threat to bomb him into acceptance. All the time, Milosevic was advancing his strategy of ethnic cleansing while we were finding out the costs of our high stakes bluffing.

We are now at the mercy of our own rhetoric. We threatened to bomb and threatened to bomb only to find that it meant nothing to Milosevic. We had a choice of making good on our threats or revealing that we were a lion that could only roar, that when the chips were down we were not up to making good on our threats.

• (3020)

Our negotiating strategy of demanding that Kosovars be allowed to live in peace or else we would bomb has become a military strategy of bombing to bring about peace. With hindsight, neither seems to have been close to the mark.

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Had we focused on our humanitarian mission of alleviating the suffering of ethnic Albanians, our focus would have been clear and our strategy would have been obvious. There seems little doubt to me that it will require ground troops to resolve this issue. When neighbour is pitted against neighbour, it cannot be managed or resolved from 30,000 feet above the earth. Bombs cannot differentiate between friend or foe in hand to hand combat.

The point I want to make clear is that we must never lose sight of our objective which is to alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians; to stop the rape, murder and displacement of innocent civilians; and to stop the burning and the pillaging of homes where people have lived for generations. Ground troops have been required in every other peacekeeping mission to date. Dropping bombs can never be considered an act of peacekeeping.

In the final analysis we want the rule of law to prevail. It is rather ironic that in order to achieve that dream, we have trampled on international rule of law by bombing Serbia even though we all consider Milosevic to be an evil dictator.

But the end does not justify the means. Our focus is to help the innocent and to save the children. What we have done is to expand the enmity which is no longer one Balkan ethnic group against another, but is now focused with greater intensity to the war making machine of the western industrialized countries that have always forsworn the desire to strike first at a nation that does not express a threat to their own internal security.

In summation, I said that while it was easy to start, it could prove difficult to finish. Having crossed the line from peacemaking to making war, the cost of achieving our objective will be significantly higher than had we focused strictly on relieving the misery of the Kosovars and leaving Serbia to the Serbians.

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there comes a time in the affairs of a nation when leaders need to embody their people, and the people their leaders. Whether we as a country send our soldiers to war is the responsibility and the accountability of the civil power, for in times past had it not been for soldiers and because we had soldiers, we can now afford to have politicians.

The people ask now who these politicians are who send soldiers in the people's name. Is it really for a noble cause? When is offensive war called an act of humanity? When is bombing peacekeeping? Can it truly be said that we are defending our high moral beliefs and defending democracy when perhaps the sending of war is the gravest betrayal of it? Perhaps we have become involved in an intrigue so dark and twisted that the cover song carries us all the way to tragedy.

We belong to a club, NATO, whose rules for membership were once noble and clear but now have incrementally changed. For the ties that bind under the NATO table are not spoken, for the appearances set above and before the club members and the world. We do our duty in the club and cite moral superiority to the community of nations. Yet because of divisions at the United Nations most are relegated to observation. All see the dead, but we cannot rightly judge, for surely all in this play have been killers.

What happens to our humanity, as neighbour beside neighbour, when the constabulary and social order evaporates? They leave all civility, take a cowardly gun and go to the neighbour's farmhouse, whose cousin is married to theirs, then murder the boy who could become a soldier, humiliate and renounce all sense of community, burn the home, steal the livestock, take any money from the victims and send the remaining souls, having lost all, on a foot journey into the unknown.

What hatred and evil comes too easily to the lips of those neighbours when together in the past they have shared the fruit of the land, co-operated in toil, though their language of birth was different and their God had a different name. Yet being brethren and part of a larger family is all cast aside for vengeance, for purity of hate, for belief in the lie of race, for a twisted version of social justice. Another bomb will not change that belief or that behaviour.

• (3025)

On the other edge of this pit of human misery and ignorance we look down, we roll the dice, we pick winners and losers for unspoken plans. Who are the villains? Who are the innocents? When old prejudice spills blood, when money may buy a war, who are the sides in the brawl and who is the referee? Sadly we know who the victims are.

Are we Canadians also victims of this circumstance? For surely the dead we know, the childless mother we know, the marred youth we know and the hollow men. Where does the evil come from and how can we stand against it? For evil we see and an evil it is. It comes from the human heart, and can that sin of the heart be stopped with another bomb?

Canada belongs to a club. We have done our duty there, but now we must reach deeper to have love beyond duty, for love of mankind. For duty can do well but love can make beauty from ashes.

Regardless of how complicated plots, hatred, betrayal and double dealing shall rage, can we find midst the brawl an honourable way for ourselves? In times past whenever called upon we have done our duty and we have done it again in this circumstance. But club membership in NATO must not be higher than the law of love to the human race. Shall we hang on to the actions of the club in the same manner that the ethnic groups hang on to their



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prejudice and willingness to choose suicide rather than life and to take uncounted innocents with them?

Today before the House we have the following non-votable take note motion:

That this House take note of the continuing human tragedy in Kosovo and the government's determination to work with the international community in order to resolve the conflict and promote a just political settlement for Kosovo that leads to the safe return of the refugees.

The motion may make us feel good, but it is unrealistic. Our original moral objectives are now undermined by our actions. More bombs at this time will not produce a humanitarian end, even a political solution.

The objectives of self-determination for a people within the rule of law and democratic process have been manipulated by Kosovo ethnic Albanians for us to fight their war of independence that they could not win on their own. So Canadians will fight and pay for it and ensure it in the end.

Who gave our government permission to fight a foreign war of independence on behalf of a local people? Maybe we should, but the decision to do that must be approached honestly in our parliament, not through the back door of the slippery slope of incremental entanglements.

The present military objectives will also not be accomplished. The assurance of the government today of success of the air war defies history and is tactically unsound. In this case we will not bomb the Serbs into submission, but that may not be the deal anyway. Rather it may be just to try out our techie stuff, to send the Russians a message. I certainly hope not. Air bombing will not deliver the stated objective, so why continue? Ego? Club rules? The children pay.

Partition of the inhabitants, separating the belligerents is the best we can hope for in this generation of hatred, in this internal civil war of independence and revenge. If we honestly become the policemen, apprehend the wrongdoers and actually protect the innocents, then that is worthwhile, but our course is not toward such as of yet. It needs to be.

We on this side of the House have added to the motion "and in particular, this House take note that the government's determination to resolve the conflict would have more credibility after the adoption of a motion submitted to this House specifying the moral, political and military objectives of Canada's involvement, subject to such conditions as this House may impose".

Let us understand that NATO is attacking a sovereign state. It is doing so not because Yugoslavia committed aggression against a neighbour country but to try to alter the Serbs' handling of a domestic separatist problem based on ethnic and cultural grounds.

In the world of diplomacy there is no bigger no-no than using military force to intervene in the internal affairs of a country.

• (3030)

NATO is an alliance that was formed solely to defend its members against aggression, not to launch attacks against others. Is NATO to become a kind of international cop, the enforcer of proper behaviour by governments? If so, why not act for instance against Turkey or East Timor?

The Turks have been brutal in their submission of Kurdish demands similar to the Serbs in Kosovo. Why not bomb the Turks? We do not because Turkey is an ally. That leaves one rule for NATO members and another for the rest of Europe, a policy without principle. That is the precedent NATO is setting in Kosovo.

NATO will likely not be successful and the air war will fail to force the Serbs to come to terms. Therefore, we can expect some unravelling of western and international order that could endanger stability far beyond the Balkans.

We now need to say to our club members in NATO that we played our role but we are out for now, putting Canadian planes on the ground to exercise independent thought and prepare for our role of peacekeeper and honest broker when the dust settles. Certainly our only role in the fighting is a symbolic one of the flag on the airplane as technically we are not needed for logistical purposes.

We have picked sides and we are no longer pure anyway. Therefore at NATO at this stage we need to say that we have done our duty, that it is over for now, put Canadian planes on the ground and prepare for the peacekeeping role of preserving a deal of separating the belligerents.

In the future the Liberal government may try to fool the people and themselves for a while with lofty speeches, but we will never do better than my suggestion in the coming months. It is a better chance for a reasonable outcome than persevering with the present course for unworkable, unrealistic objectives. Canada should stop our bombing now, recover some of our honest broker status and prepare for peacekeeping when it can be used.

No matter how we slice it, Canada has slid into the wrong. We can fix it. We can lead a way out instead of being stuck in this downward spiral. As a nation we need to move from duty to the higher principle of love. We have a unique opportunity to bring some duty out of ashes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Frontenac—Mégantic.

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It is with a sense of moral obligation that I rise on this morning of April 13—I should say this night of April 13 since I have been here since around 2 p.m.—to take part in this emergency debate on the situation in Kosovo.

I was not obliged to join in, my whip did not twist my arm, I am doing it out of a sense of moral obligation. After watching what has been going on in Kosovo for several months, and in the former Yugoslavia for several years, I believe that as parliamentarians we have the duty not to stand idly by.

It is our duty not only to rise in the House, but also to listen to our fellow citizens who have something to say on this issue. This is what I have been doing for the past few days knowing this debate might take place today.

Everybody agrees the situation is complex. But we can no longer tolerate ongoing crimes against humanity. We can no longer tolerate massacres such as those in Rwanda a few years ago. One of my constituent comes from Rwanda, my son has several friends whose parents used to live in Rwanda; they escaped and came here as refugees. In the case of Rwanda, the west dragged its feet and failed to prevent the massacre.

● (3035)

For me, it was a lesson. We can no longer let such things occur. Hundreds of thousands of people died needlessly because the west failed to get organized to prevent such a tragedy.

At least in Kosovo, NATO countries were more prepared morally to intervene. This time they were more committed to intervene even though the solution is a very complex one. We could see it coming, it has been going on for years.

First there was the conflict between the Serbs and the Croats, then we all remember what happened in Bosnia. For the people of Kosovo, this has gone on for a number of months, close to a year now. Warnings, negotiations, the Rambouillet summit and threats were used to get President Milosevic to stop his planned campaign of ethnic cleansing, if he did not want to face NATO strikes.

These strikes did follow, because the president of Serbia decided to continue with his plan, which led to the exodus of 600,000 to 800,000 Kosovars out of Kosovo. This, of course, followed upon threats of all sorts against them.

It is in my nature to always try to weight issues as much as possible, and to pay attention to the information received via the various media, while realizing that there are often two sides to a conflict. There are often two sides to any kind of story.

When 600,000 refugees leave the country, there are 600,000 stories for observers to hear at the borders of Albania, Macedonia or Montenegro. And 600,000 to 800,000 people cannot all be lying,

especially when we see their columns of misery as they come to the end of a journey of many days without even basic necessities.

We have heard of people whose passports have been seized. Any document that could prove ownership of property was destroyed. Even in the most optimistic of scenarios, they will have trouble getting their property back. Moreover, we have also seen that property going up in smoke. This is a truly deplorable situation.

Dictators' imposition of their will can no longer be tolerated without any reaction. I am no expert in international law but, under the circumstances, it is regrettable that the UN cannot intervene in this conflict. There are countries on the security council, like China and Russia, that have a veto and that are preventing the resolution of situations like the one in Iraq. There was international support for action against Saddam Hussein.

When things are blocked as they are in this case, NATO steps in. This is not the ideal situation. As the previous speaker said, allies are involved. Situations exist in some NATO countries that could be criticized, such as in Turkey and other countries. This is not, however, what today's debate is about. Still, we must not forget our critical eye and our humanitarian feelings for the people suffering cruelty in these countries.

We have an international organization barely 50 years old that is somewhat tied up by rules and the jurisprudence that has guided it in such situations.

● (3040)

This has to stop, because these sorts of situations occur pretty much everywhere. They are happening outside Europe. We need only think of the people of Tibet, whose government is in exile in India. They happen pretty much the world over. We saw what happened in Asia. So, I say, enough.

We speak of globalization in trade terms, but maybe we should think of the globalization of peace. In other words, communities should join together to actively work toward peace. We do not have all the figures, but it currently costs \$150 million per day to bomb the former Yugoslavia and the various military or civilian targets, including refineries, to deprive Milosevic of some military power. But do we hear about that kind of money being spent on humanitarian assistance?

When it comes to humanitarian assistance, we must rely on government assistance and all Canadians must be encouraged to make a contribution. But at the same time, we should invest at least as much money as we do in offensive military initiatives. We must be prepared to implement a new Marshall plan following this crisis, otherwise it will make no sense. We will have witnessed a deportation. We must already be thinking about some form of help for those afflicted by the war. This could even include the Serbs, because there is no doubt in my mind that many are good people

who are the victims of a dictatorship, of a tyrant who has decided to impose his will.

Some progress has been made regarding international peace. However, the tribunals that judge war crimes and crimes against humanity are frustrated in their efforts. Mrs. Roy was prevented from inquiring about a massacre that took place in Kosovo and in the former Yugoslavia. Everyone supports peace, but I often hear people say that, while they support peace, they do not want us to intervene in these conflicts. What would we do if we saw our neighbour beat his wife and children? We would call the police. In a case like this one, I think we must send in ground troops if that is called for.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, despite the early hour, I feel compelled to take part in this debate initiated by the Prime Minister and his government, the Liberal government, if only out of respect for my constituents, particularly the hundreds that I met during the Easter break, who shared with me their thoughts and fears, asked me what my position was, of course, and urged me to make representations.

Is Canadian participation justified? Are the air strikes justified? Should we become involved on the ground? Members will agree with me that participation in an armed conflict always leads to pain. We know only the date and time a conflict has begun.

• (3045)

Today marks the 21st day of NATO air strikes in Yugoslavia. Certain NATO country representatives thought, perhaps understandably, that at most three, four or five days of air strikes would be enough to persuade the Serb president to call off his forces. After 21 days, not a single member of this House can predict the outcome of the conflict. All we know is when the air strikes began.

These air strikes were all but demanded by the 19 NATO countries, because what is happening to the Kosovars is a human tragedy that no one on this planet can accept. However, as my colleague, the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, put it so well a few moments ago, there are two sides to everything.

A while ago a commentator on the public broadcasting corporation said "In an armed conflict the first victim is truth". After hearing reports on the public network, on CNN and from independent reporters, we have to admit that the Kosovars are very close to being the victims of a genocide.

Here are a few events that could justify air strikes. Entire families were locked in their homes, which were then set on fire. Children screamed and cried before dying. Mass rapes are taking place in unprecedented numbers. This is still going on, on the eve of the year 2000. People are being killed for the sheer pleasure of killing, often in the presence of loved ones, women and children.

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They steal. They humiliate. They deliberately separate families just to harm them.

The 19 NATO countries want to bring Slobodan Milosevic to his knees, and rightly so. No words are strong enough to describe this man, but few could be used in this House.

As one of the 19 NATO countries, Canada must show solidarity; it had to take part in this action, however limited it was. The Minister of National Defence deployed 12 F-18 aircraft, which are stationed in Italy.

Of course 12 aircraft might represent only a 1 or 2% contribution at most. However symbolic the contribution, the fact that we are standing by the other 18 NATO countries is witness to our will to condemn a tyrant such as Milosevic.

It is said that there are 650,000 refugees outside Kosovo and that 800,000 Kosovars are more or less prisoners inside their own country. The Bloc Québécois, like all the other parties in the House, supports the air strikes ordered by the Liberal government. However if ever ground troops need to be sent in, let us hope it will be to maintain, safeguard or restore peace rather than to engage in ground strikes, or military actions, involving combat troops in the true sense of the word, as in Vietnam.

• (3050)

I hope, therefore, that Canadians will not be sent to wage war, but rather to keep the peace.

I also fault the Prime Minister and his government for their systematic refusal to allow the 301 parliamentarians in this House to voice their opinion through a vote.

I cannot understand the dogged refusal of the Prime Minister, who systematically, maliciously even, refuses to allow each of the members, who represent a total of 30 million Canadians, to rise and say "I agree" or "I disagree". Some would probably rather stay in their offices so as not to have to state their position. He would win such a vote.

We in the Bloc Québécois, however, take our politics more seriously than the Prime Minister who, in 1991, had his mind changed in this House by the former leader of the Liberal Party, John Turner, in the space of 36 minutes. Yesterday in the House all party leaders spoke on this matter.

To conclude, I simply want to make a few recommendations to the Prime Minister, and to his Minister of National Defence in particular.

Nine days ago, here in the parliamentary precinct, they gave a news conference in which they jumped the gun on the NATO agreement by stating that serious consideration was being given to the possibility of intervention on the ground.

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The Minister of Defence needs to show solidarity but he ought not to be stealing NATO's thunder by courting the media. He must be in solidarity with NATO. As for the Prime Minister, he needs to play his cards properly, not to ensure that he is re-elected, but to properly represent the people, properly represent Canadians, and Quebeckers in particular.

In closing, I call upon Serbian President Milosevic to immediately give up on his obstinacy and to lay down his arms. It is impossible for him to win, so the sooner he admits that he is wrong, the better it will be for his people and the better it will be for the entire planet.

[English]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague.

I rise today with a heavy heart to see once again human tragedy happening in the Balkans. When I became a member of parliament I never thought I would debate a situation where Canadian troops were engaged in combat.

With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the desire of those who were oppressed either politically or economically rose to ask for freedom and autonomy so that they could control their own destiny. However, dictators and those leaders living in the past have been using old repressive methods to control these aspirations.

We have had many hot spots in the world. Somalia, Rwanda, Iraq and Afghanistan are a few that come to mind. However the way the world has responded to these tragedies has raised eyebrows and created an uneasiness.

Today the skies over Yugoslavia are light with trails of missiles and rows of fighter aircraft. The ground in Kosovo is on fire and soaking with the blood of the innocent. It is a scenario that no one wanted to see.

• (3055)

I question whether it was necessary to go to war. Just because the dictator Milosevic did not sign the peace accord, was it necessary to use force to bring him to the table? I have heard arguments on both side but I am still skeptical.

Today a large number of lives have been lost. Over half a million refugees are living in horrifying conditions. The country of Yugoslavia is losing its infrastructure. That will hurt the innocent population in years to come. Is this not a very heavy price to pay?

That is why we are asking whether the bombing of Yugoslavia was the right strategy. I have heard lots of arguments on both sides.

Let me say both sides have been quite convincing, but somehow I remain convinced that there could have been a better course of action.

In my view NATO has been responding to the situation as it is arising and not with a well thought plan. I am afraid that NATO has played into the hands of this ruthless leader.

My party is supporting the current strategy of NATO. As facts stand now, it seems that we have put ourselves into a corner. I agree that under no circumstances can we let Milosevic win, or there will be no peaceful future for mankind. Hence our support for the current NATO strategy.

Nevertheless we must ask some hard questions. Today polls are indicating that Canadians are favouring ground force intervention because they cannot stand the plight of the refugees. Actually who can stand the plight of the refugees and what we see on our television screens? It is horrifying. The plight of the Kosovars have touched the hearts of all. We want to see this tragedy end soon.

Military analysts are suggesting ground troops for a quick end to this misery. However I would like to caution that bombing was supposed to help bring Milosevic to the table, and 20 days later they are still bombing. They were supposed to be no refugees, and today we have over half a million refugees. We know Milosevic is a ruthless leader with no heart, but the tragedy is that the Kosovars are paying the price.

I understand we cannot stand idly by. The Rwanda crisis indicated that we cannot stand idly by. Hence the support my party has reluctantly given to the bombing of Yugoslavia. Perhaps it is time to take a pulse and open up a new front which I would like to call a diplomatic front or a diplomatic war.

Canada is in a position to take a leadership role. Canada can start by sending our diplomats to world capitals. Canada can campaign to get world leaders to descend on Belgrade.

• (3100)

Let us kick diplomatic sense into Milosevic. If he is not willing to listen, then we can seek out other Serb leaders. We must point out to them that the world will not stand for the atrocities that have been committed by the current leadership in Serbia. I am sure we will find Serb leaders who are willing to listen.

We can kick-start the UN into action. The UN is proving to be ineffective. It was ineffective in Rwanda. It has become ineffective in Yugoslavia. How long is the UN going to remain an ineffective organization? Let us kick-start the UN into action. The way the security council is designed it can use its veto. Nevertheless, we owe it to future generations to put all our effort into kick-starting the UN, otherwise it will become irrelevant in future world events.

We have heard from numerous speakers here, but let us get Russia involved. Why Russia? Because of Russia's special ties with Yugoslavia. Perhaps we can entice Russia with the carrot of economic aid.

Let us explore the options. There are a lot of options. We owe it to the international community to restart the diplomatic offensive.

Having said that, I salute the troops who are helping the refugees, those who are doing peacekeeping duties and those who are risking their lives over Yugoslavia to bring peace. We are proud of our soldiers.

We have heard of the special place Kosovo is for Serbia. I also heard from a U.S. general that Serbs can withstand pain to achieve an objective. I beg to differ on both points. While Kosovo may hold a special place for Serbia, Kosovo also holds a special place for the ethnic Albanians who call Kosovo their home. This is what the Serbians must understand. The Kosovars are citizens of Yugoslavia as well.

NATO has come up with the new proposal to call it a protectorate. Some of these proposals, the bombing of Yugoslavia, the creation of this protectorate infringe on international law.

I conclude by saying I hope and pray there will not be another debate in this House on the issue of Canada's involvement in a war.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the emotions of many of my colleagues in the House today. I did not realize when I first ran for the nomination to become a member of parliament that it would involve debating matters of such magnitude.

This morning while walking over here from my hotel there were a thousand thoughts in my mind. I had spent most of the night listening to the debate, between sleeps. It is obvious that we have a huge dilemma on our hands.

• (3105)

It seems to me we can boil this down to one fundamental question. How much killing do we engage in in order to stop killing? It is a sobering thought.

From the reports that we have, and we believe they are reliable, there is no doubt in our minds that tremendous atrocities are taking place in the former Yugoslavia. There are great difficulties among the people.

It reminds me of some of my family history. We take our freedoms so much for granted. When I was walking here I did not feel threatened. Several cab drivers wanted to give me a ride but they were rather generous in their invitations and did not threaten me in any way. There are people not only in Kosovo but in many parts of the world today who do not have the kind of freedom we enjoy in Canada.

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It takes me back to my family history. Approximately 75 years ago my family faced the same situation as people are now facing in Kosovo. It is generally known with a name like Epp that I come from immigrant stock. Members of my family were very firm Christian believers. Perhaps they took the Christian teaching beyond what many do, but they also believed that it was wrong to kill another person for whatever reason.

My grandparents on both sides, both my mom's and my dad's families, even though they did not know each other at the time had very parallel circumstances. My mom's dad had three of his brothers shot. What was the crime? They were not supporting the revolution in Russia after the first world war. Because they were not in support of the revolution they were considered enemies of the revolution and therefore were fair game. These marauding soldiers as they were called went into the Mennonite villages and shot all the men and all the boys who were old enough to fight. Both of my grandfathers said that it was time to get out. They took their families and fled by night and hid by day until they got out of the country. It is an amazing story.

I still remember my grandmother talking about it. I think this is taking the Christian faith to the ultimate. I remember as a youngster hearing my parents and grandparents talk about their experiences. I grew up in one of those farm family homes before there was central heating. It is amazing but we had a house which had a hole in the ceiling on the main floor in order to provide some heat to the second floor. When we were kids we would hear the adults speaking. The hole in the floor was in the hallway upstairs. We left our door open so that some of the heat would come into our bedroom. We heard them talking about this.

I specifically remember my grandmother. She was probably the strongest one in this, although grandfather echoed it. Even though members of our family had been ruthlessly killed, she said that we cannot continue to hold that against them, that we must practise forgiveness.

It is regrettable that the Lord's Prayer has been taken out of our morning prayers in this House. We used to pray: Lord forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. My grandparents, ever grateful that they were able to come to Canada, insisted that their children exercise no animosity and seek no revenge.

• (3110)

Over all these years, these people, my family and other families like mine, have been very open to their former country, Russia. They have worked in order to bring some peace and harmony to that country.

One thing occurred to me this morning when I was thinking about this. When I think of what happened to members of my

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family who refused to shoot their enemies but who came here and left some of the family behind, left that country behind, I cannot help but think that perhaps there is a divine purpose for all of this. We know that the prosperity, and I am not speaking only of financial prosperity but the total prosperity, the freedom of our family was far in excess of that which they could have fought and killed for.

If we look at that part of the world today, people there have very little in comparison. They have very little in terms of personal freedoms, very little in terms of economic strength and very little in terms of amenities which we take for granted.

As Canadians and in the solid Christian tradition on which this country was founded, we ought to be emphasizing what we can do there to alleviate the suffering. We do not have any idea of what kind of terror those people have gone through.

Our son worked for a while in Bosnia. He has been in many different parts of the world. One of the things that struck him when he was over there was how much the countryside was the same as Alberta's, how the homes looked so similar, but close up the difference was that they were full of bullet holes. He told us of some of the atrocities. It is difficult to speak about them. Some things are so horrible one cannot even verbalize them.

He spoke of the atrocities against women. One of the things my son did over there was to provide refuge for people who were victims of these marauding what they call soldiers but that is a misnomer. They are marauding criminals who go around raping, pillaging, killing and burning. That is what is happening in Kosovo.

I would like to see big time in big spades Canada reaching out to those people in love and compassion and providing a refuge for them in this time of trouble.

I cannot imagine some of the things they are going through. My son told us about some of the things. I will resist the temptation to talk about them here because as I said, they are so horrible I cannot even bring myself to say the words.

Canada is known around the world for its peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts. I have some problems with the fact that we are engaging in dropping bombs. Is there a worse terror? Which is more terrorizing, the fear of the marauding tribe coming into someone's home at night with guns and bayonets or the stray bomb that blows someone instantly into oblivion?

These are difficult questions. We have spoken of having a vote. What a difficult vote that would be, yet that is what should be done.

In conclusion, I simply say my thoughts, my prayers, my compassion are for the people over there who are suffering.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy to criticize, but hard to act. This is very true in the case of

the people, organizations, countries and parties that condemn NATO's air strikes in Yugoslavia.

● (3115)

It is easy to point out, as they do, what should not have been done. But they should tell us what, in their opinion, should have been done. Of course they will say that we should have continued to negotiate.

Really? Continue to negotiate? Let us look at the facts. On February 6, the members of the contact group, including Russia, gave two weeks to the two sides to agree to a peace plan. To that end, their officials were locked up in Rambouillet, with an excellent chef. It is said that meals taken together are a good way to get closer.

On February 23, since there was still no agreement, the UN secretary general extended the period to March 15. At the end of that period, the contact group realized that not only was there still no agreement, but Milosevic had taken advantage of those six weeks to continue his ethnic cleansing operation. Only then did NATO decide to strike. What else could we do to save the Kosovars?

I will not repeat what was said by those who spoke before me to defend the legitimacy of the strikes and to support the idea that, should the air bombing not produce any result, we will surely have to send in ground troops, but with parliament's approval.

Let us first take a look at the past to see what history has taught us, so as to have a better perspective in the context of this debate. Then, looking to the future, I will speak of the hopes and the problems too arising from this precedent in which a multinational organization has taken upon itself to intervene militarily for humanitarian reasons on the soil of a country that has committed no foreign aggression.

Let us look at the lessons of history first. In 1755, Acadians, British subjects against their will, refused to swear allegiance to King George II, a foreigner to them. England deported them and scattered them in its other colonies, leaving only English colonists in the country.

In 1999, the Kosovars, Yugoslav subjects against their will, subjected to the Serbs, revolt against their domination. Milosevic savagely drives them toward the border.

The great dispersal of the Acadians, the forced exodus of the Kosovars: two and a half centuries apart, two ethnic cleansings, the second being the most brutal, I agree. British pilots involved in the air strikes in Serbia are trying to prevent Milosevic from following the example of their king, George II.

Second, on January 8, 1918, in a famous speech, Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, announced a people's

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right to self-determination as one of the 14 principles to underlie the peace treaties concluded at the end of the war. Honoured in part at Versailles, this principle presided over the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Yugoslavia, however, born of this break-up, remained a mosaic of peoples. It took the collapse of communism to in turn break up the new Yugoslavia, which continued to comprise various peoples, including primarily Serbs and Kosovars. And we know what happened.

Perhaps the lesson to be drawn from the situations in Yugoslavia and in Canada is to allow nations their own governments.

Third, on March 7, 1935, Hitler moved his troops across the Rhine, reoccupying the Rhineland and thus violating one of the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles. France and England could legally have used force to oppose the Germans and drive them out. At the time, Hitler's army was very small. The human cost of this operation would have been very low, but pacifists were against it.

Three years later, on March 14, 1938, emboldened by this lack of reaction, Germany annexed Austria. On September 30 of that year, France and England, still in the grip of pacifist movements, abandoned Czechoslovakia to its fate. The country was immediately occupied by the Germans.

It would have cost very little to nip the German dictator's ambitions in the bud in 1935. Because people refused to pay that price, it took a world war that went on for five years and cost 30 million men and women their lives to finally overthrow the tyrant.

A French journalist recently declared that he hated war, but was afraid of people who are too afraid of war.

• (3120)

Let us take our inspiration from this remark and remember the German example when deciding what to do in Serbia. There is nothing like dogmatic pacifists to set off wars.

Now, for what lies ahead. NATO's intervention in Serbia sets an historic precedent. It could give the world community the right to send military forces into third countries for humanitarian reasons. There is no doubt that this is a large incentive to leaders of countries to improve their treatment of the populations under their control. I have three comments.

First, let us make sure that, if the right to intervene is ever recognized, it will be sufficiently well defined to ensure that humanitarian grounds cannot be invoked to abusively attack a country.

Oka amply showed how an internal military operation could be blown out of proportion, exaggerated and misrepresented by foreign media. During the Oka crisis I remember meeting in Dorval

a dozen of European MPs who had been sent by their parliaments to look into what had been reported as our barbaric treatment of Indians.

Let us make sure the door we rightly opened to military interventions on humanitarian grounds cannot be abused in the future by aggressors claiming some minor trespass against political ethics, which would be exaggerated of course.

Second, let us suppose—purely hypothetically of course—that what the Serbs are doing today to the Kosovars, the Russians or the Chinese will do it tomorrow to one of their minorities eager to shake off their yoke. Would one country or a group of countries go and bomb Moscow or Beijing? Of course not. The only chance the precedent created by NATO in Serbia will succeed in establishing the principle of international military intervention on humanitarian grounds is dependent on the guilty country being weak.

Third and last comment: some are taking offence at the fact that the strikes are probably illegal, since they were not authorized by the UN, the only body empowered to do so. But we should not forget that often the law comes after the fact, if the cause is just.

In Quebec striking was illegal for a long time. It took workers in Asbestos and elsewhere to legitimately defy the law for the law to be struck down because what they did was just. Let us not be moved by criticisms to the effect that not only pacifists, but also legalists could oppose our actions in Serbia.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased to take part in what I feel is a very important debate on Canada's intervention in the former Yugoslavia, Serbia specifically.

I would like to start with a Latin saying *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, which means if you wish peace, prepare for war. I must admit that it is a bit ironic to start my speech in such a way, since it is linked in a way with the principle of dissuasion which has put the planet in fear for the past while.

In the light of what is going on at the present time, however, this saying must be understood as having a totally new connotation as we speak. We find ourselves in the somewhat embarrassing position of having to use force, even to wage war, in order, ironically, to impose peace. Given that peace is defined in relation to war, in that peace can only exist in the absence of conflict, needless to say there is some feeling of discomfort about all of this, one that is totally legitimate under the circumstances.

I would also say that a degree of sympathy can be felt for the Serbian demonstrators throughout the world, including here in Canada and Quebec, who are massing in front of legislative buildings and foreign consulates to protest NATO intervention in their country.

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It is understandable that seeing their country attacked in this way may indeed awake in them a certain nationalistic pride. As well, they have very legitimate concerns about their relatives and friends still living in the former Yugoslavia.

• (3125)

While we can sympathize with these protesters, while we deeply care for peace, it is absolutely out of the question not to act, to stand idly by while terrible things are going on in Kosovo.

We cannot stand idly by when such ethnic cleansing operations—which look more and more like genocide—are taking place. It is impossible to remain silent when we see such massive displacements of human beings, when we see 650,000 people forced to leave and go into exile. We cannot remain silent when we see those burned houses, those civilians killed in such cowardly fashion.

Some might wonder if it was absolutely necessary to go to war. Was it absolutely necessary to resort to military action against Yugoslavia?

First, it is illusory to think we could simply have relied on the good will of the Belgrade regime, considering that even NATO's bombings cannot undermine its grim determination to literally eradicate Kosovo's Albanian population, by whatever means are necessary.

Remembering Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia should be enough to convince us that military action was absolutely necessary. Neither must we forget that the government of Milosevic knowingly, deliberately turning its back, violated a number of the resolutions passed by the United Nations on the internal situation, resolutions 1199 and 1203, and the October 1998 agreements between the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, NATO and the former Yugoslavia.

The international community criticized Milosevic on several occasions, but he decided to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the international community. How could we, under the circumstances, remain indifferent, not act, do nothing?

My colleague for Terrebonne—Blainville recalled a number of relevant precedents earlier. We must remember that the international community remained silent, did nothing and watched impassively as Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland. A few years later, it was definitely silent and impassive as Austria was annexed. It was silent, I might even say it was an accomplice, in the breakup of Czechoslovakia with the infamous Munich agreements that France and England signed.

When Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned to London, the man who would later become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill, said:

[*English*]

“You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour and you will have war”.

[*Translation*]

He said “You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour and you will have war.”

I think we should remember the lessons from these words of Winston Churchill. You can of course say the situation is different today, that one involved aggression against foreign countries, although in the case of the remilitarization of the Rhineland, it was a bit different, it involved the annexation of foreign countries, so it was not an internal matter.

• (3130)

Any aggression against a foreign country violates international law. NATO's action would therefore be illegal, except that there is a growing conviction that there is an obligation, not to say a duty, under international law to intervene on humanitarian grounds.

To draw a parallel with domestic law, standing idly by and watching what is happening in Kosovo without taking some sort of action in spite of the humanitarian duty to do so would be tantamount to doing nothing to help a person in danger.

The international community had a duty to intervene. Because of how it operates, and because of the Russian and Chinese vetoes, the UN was not in a position to intervene. The international community turned to NATO.

We should also be glad that NATO decided to provide a form of humanitarian assistance to the civilian populations forced to flee to neighbouring countries, in addition to its military intervention.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Liberal government to put the question of any future intervention by ground troops to a vote following a debate in the House. It is only right in a democratic country such as Canada that something as fundamental as sending ground troops abroad be approved by members of the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments of my colleague. Is he my colleague? No, he is a member of the Bloc.

I listened to the comments of my fellow parliamentarian with care. I am sure he has been agonizing over the same question I have. If people are peace loving and do not attack each other, there is no need for restraint and no need for people to go in with guns and try to hold a person back.

What do we do with a person, as we have in this situation, who seems hell-bent on destroying other people's lives? What do we do to stop him? Basically it is replacing one war with another, but the general tone of his speech was that he would like to pull out of there and not do anything. Then the atrocities would continue. I would like to have him respond to my comments.



*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague—if I may call him that, when he is a member of the Reform Party, but he made the same comment—to check *Hansard* for my remarks, because there is indeed a sort of dilemma, almost an existential dilemma, surrounding the situation prevailing at the present time.

We are profoundly attached to peace. We would have liked to avoid a military intervention. We would have liked to have been able to bring into play a whole battery of interventions before having to resort to the use of arms to bring the Milosevic government around to have kinder feelings and show more consideration for the Albanian population of Kosovo.

I would venture to say that we have in fact used all possible and imaginable means under the circumstances: an embargo, a number of resolutions, and negotiations between the parties involved. Yet even under the threat of the possible use of force, the Milosevic government maintained its stubborn stand to not heed the appeals by the international community.

• (3135)

Under the circumstances, I believe that we had in fact no choice but to intervene, as we are doing at the present time.

Of course, it is our fondest wish, as it is yours I imagine, that the Milosevic government will finally listen to reason, thus avoiding any further deterioration of the situation, and will put an end as promptly as possible to the wrongful actions its regime is engaged in at the present time, in Kosovo in particular.

[English]

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today. Conflict comes about when alternatives to peace are either exhausted or abandoned by reasonable people. The current crisis in the Balkans has deep roots in history dating back even beyond the 14th century.

In the international community nations are sovereign. The nation state is the highest authority. Even then the nation state is tempered by the fact that we have international organizations such as the United Nations. Whether it be the UN, OPEC or others, the fact is that states limit some of their sovereignty.

Sovereignty therefore is not unlimited. States cannot act with impunity. When the lives and the safety of individuals or populations are victimized by governments, I believe it is the responsibility, indeed the duty, of the international community to respond.

We are witnessing a crisis in Kosovo of epic proportions. By any standards the conflict there cannot be tolerated. In the past when governments and the international community did not respond, we

witnessed the forced expulsions of Asians from Uganda, the atrocities in Cambodia under Pol Pot, and recently in Central Africa and Rwanda in 1994.

The philosopher Monescue reminds us of the fact that governments are not infinite. The power of governments must be tempered by common sense. Clearly the actions which we are seeing in the Balkans, the actions which we are seeing in Kosovo, force nations to respond in a way which says that we will not allow, will not tolerate this kind of atrocity.

The government of Milosevic in Yugoslavia clearly has gone beyond, by any definition, the norms of international behaviour. The formation of NATO in 1949 came about as a defensive alliance to stop aggression. There is no one in the House and certainly no one I know who likes to see the kind of bloodshed, the kind of forced expulsion of ethnic Albanians that is currently going on.

Clearly the road to peace does not lie in Ottawa. The road to peace does not lie in Washington. The road to peace lies in Belgrade.

The events which have unfolded over the last few weeks have developed because in 1989 the limited autonomy which 90% of Kosovar Albanians enjoyed was stripped away by the Milosevic government. The seeds of destruction have started to escalate since 1989.

We have a responsibility as a government and as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to take action when we see these kinds of rights stripped away. We have to take action when we see that the type of ethnic cleansing we witnessed in Bosnia in 1992 through 1996 is escalating.

• (3140)

There is no question that our involvement is part of the obligations that we have as a member of NATO. We cannot say that we want to be a member of this organization but when push comes to shove that we do not want to participate because that is not our role.

There are obligations and there are duties as a member of an alliance. Although our contribution may be small by other state standards, we are signifying that as a member of the international community we are prepared to act. We are prepared to stand up for rights and we are prepared to say enough is enough.

Canada has a long and proud tradition as a peacekeeping nation. Canada also has a long and proud tradition of responding in times of conflict when the call has gone out, whether it be in the great war, the second world war, Korea or the many peacekeeping operations which developed as a result of the work by former Prime Minister Pearson. This nation has never shrunk, never stepped aside when called upon by the international community. This tradition of involvement, this tradition of participating and doing the right thing, is reflected in the current situation in Kosovo.

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We are acting because of humanitarian concerns. We are not acting to attack and say that this side is right or this side is wrong. We are saying that morally we know that what is happening is indefensible and that we have the responsibility to participate. I would hope that genuine peace will come quickly.

As I said before, I believe that the decision for peace lies in Belgrade. It does not lie in Ottawa. It does not lie in other NATO capitals. The fact is that there have been resolutions before the United Nations. There have been in the past statements made under resolution 1160 which called for all parties in March 1998 to find a peaceful settlement to the crisis.

Then we had resolution 1199 in September of last year. It demanded that both sides end the hostilities, not just one side but both sides. Clearly NATO was indicating that it did not want the conflict to continue to escalate. We know that the Balkans have always been known as the powder keg of Europe. In fact the start of the great war in 1914 occurred because of in part the assassination of Archduke France Ferdinand in June 1914 in Sarajevo in what is now Bosnia.

Knowing that history and knowing that we are looking at the ethnic Albanians not only in Kosovo but in Macedonia and Albania proper, this is a very volatile area. In October of last year NATO threatened to use air power if a peaceful solution was not agreed upon.

We then had the recent peace talks in France. At that time part of the proposed agreement was for the cessation of hostilities, for the bringing in of international monitors to look at a timeframe where people in that area would be able to vote on their future. The fact is that it takes two sides, two parties, to bring about a resolution of conflict. Regrettably that did not occur.

• (3145)

Canada has continued to work toward a negotiated settlement. Canada's involvement clearly has not only been on the military front but on the diplomatic front. We are committed to peace, a long lasting peace not just in Kosovo but in the entire region.

What are the objectives? The objectives, by NATO's actions, are to stop the killings and the ethnic cleansings. We have a mass migration of 500,000 people or more. Anyone watching television cannot help but be moved by the plight of those men, women and children.

We are very fortunate in this country that we only watch it on television or read about it. Although we have not experienced that, it does not mean we do not have the right and, indeed, the obligation to intervene when we know that things are wrong.

This is a humanitarian crisis. I believe, therefore, that if it takes the might of NATO to bring about an end to the conflict then so be it.

What we are looking for is an end to this violence and the withdrawal of Yugoslav and Serbian security forces. I would hope to see a disarmament on both sides of the conflict so that we can bring about genuine peace.

Even when peace is established and the monitors are hopefully in there, there is a massive rebuilding to go on and that, of course, is where the international community will have a very important role to play.

There has been talk in the House about the use or potential use of ground forces. It is certainly my fervent hope that we will not come to the point of having to discuss that. Given the history and the tenacity of the Serbs, which we saw during their heroic struggle against the Nazis in the 1940s, and given the terrain, I do not believe ground troops would be either advisable or logical given that we could wind up in a very long and protracted conflict. We want to shorten this conflict and hopefully the military air power will be enough.

Members have called for a debate on the deployment of ground troops. I would agree that if there is any contemplation by the government to look at ground forces that we debate it in the House and, indeed, look at voting on the issue.

In conclusion, I think we are all united in the fact that the actions we see currently in Kosovo defy description. We must be resolved as one, particularly when our fighting forces are engaged in dangerous combat over Yugoslavia. Our brave men and women are involved in a conflict and I believe it is the responsibility and duty of members to support our fighting forces.

I hope that the resolution to this conflict and true peace will come about because reasonable people will be sitting around the table discussing ways to develop a long and effective peace not just for Kosovo but for the region as a whole. I hope that in the future we will not have to see actions such as what has currently been undertaken in the name of peace and humanity.

• (3150)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question.

I am really disappointed we only had 17 hours to debate such an important issue in this House. My colleague from Dartmouth and I have spent the whole night in the House to get a chance to speak and give our view on the crisis in Kosovo. This is regrettable, because just yesterday, the Prime Minister told the House there would be a debate and every member would have the opportunity to speak. That is why I wanted to make this point.

I also would like to ask a question to try to clarify the position of the NDP, especially mine and that of my colleagues.

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Would my colleague agree that at some point in a war, or in a conflict anywhere in the world, there should be a pause? One must try to open the door to negotiations. One must try to find solutions. This is the reason why the NDP said clearly other people should be approached, including Russia, to try to get them involved.

We must go to Milosevic and tell him "Stop the killing, the massacre you are perpetrating. Stop it, and we will stop the strikes. We will sit at the negotiating table unconditionally to try to find a humanitarian solution for all and for the well being of the whole world."

I would like to hear what my colleague on the other side of the House has to say.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the signals for a negotiated settlement must come from Belgrade. My colleague talks about having no conditions at all. NATO has clearly indicated certain conditions. The difficulty of having breathing space is that it is often a time for parties to regroup.

What we have here is a two-pronged approach. We have the current military operations that are going on in Kosovo and Yugoslavia. I agree with my colleague that we need to involve the Russians. Yesterday, the German foreign minister was talking about involving the Russians more.

There are discussions going on behind the scenes, but in order to have discussions we have to have a position for which people are prepared to stand up and say "yes, we are prepared to stop the ethnic cleansing that is going on".

What is happening is that there seems to be no signal from Milosevic that he is prepared, under any circumstances at the moment, to do the kind of things that my colleague is asking for. I would suggest to my colleague that diplomacy is always the better route. The difficulty, however, is that in order to have diplomacy we need to have people of goodwill who are prepared to sit down and negotiate.

It is not like this has just happened. The road to the conflict has been simmering for many years, but more so within the last year. I think Milosevic has received enough signals to know that at some point what is going on now was going to happen if he was not prepared to sit down reasonably. There were arguments on both sides, but the negotiations in Rambouillet, France indicated that they rejected all of the proposals and conditions. We cannot have a starting point if one side refuses to accept any conditions at all.

In conclusion, I hope that the discussions going on behind the scenes will move more to the forefront. In the meantime, I do not think we can relinquish our resolve in dealing with this situation.

• (3155)

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to participate in this take note debate.

We have already heard from the Prime Minister and some of the Liberal government cabinet ministers in this long, take note debate on the crisis in Kosovo.

I think the House can and should do much more than this take note debate of the obvious. Canadians want us to participate in a non-partisanship way on this important issue. This take note debate becomes irrelevant and just acts as a rubber stamp. It allows parliament to simply rubber stamp the policies and decisions that have already been made by the Prime Minister and his top bureaucrats. I think that is harmful to the House and will be more so in the future.

On the Liberal leadership mismanagement, I would like to point out two things. The American secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, has been left to conduct a form of shuttle diplomacy in the time period preceding the NATO bombing of Serbia, as we have all seen on TV.

The Liberals have done very little on this issue. This is unlike the historical role and conduct of the Canadian government in this century. I do not recall anything that it has done to resolve this crisis diplomatically so far.

Canadians served in the Boer War early in the 1900s. We served in two world wars, in Korea, in Cyprus, in Haiti, in the Persian Gulf, in Somalia and in Bosnia, to name a few of the conflicts around the world where we have contributed a peacemaking and peacekeeping role.

The point is that throughout this century Canada has been seen as a just country active on the world stage and a major contributor to peace in the world. We have led negotiations in treaties. We have prevented the outbreak of violence. We have been perceived as fair and just in the conduct of these affairs.

Canada has earned a name as a mediator and we have been in a better position to mediate than any other country in the world. On the world stage our leaders have been looked up to with great respect and hope by those who find their rights and privileges threatened or even taken away. That is our legacy.

Today we find that the Liberals seem to have abandoned our traditional role of exemplifying leadership in resolving conflicts around the world.

I scold and blame the Liberals for abandoning Canada's traditional role of seeking out and managing to have peaceful negotiations engaged in by the international community. That is where the leadership has let us down. The Prime Minister, the foreign affairs minister and the defence minister did not exercise the kind of diplomacy that Canada is famous for.

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On ending ethnic cleansing, the official opposition strongly believes that Canada must stand shoulder to shoulder with our NATO allies to ensure that the Serbs end their aggression against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

The political and moral objective of NATO military action in Yugoslavia is to punish and halt the ethnic cleansing which is being perpetrated by the Serbs in Kosovo.

The military objective is to damage the Serbs' military capability, to end the practice of ethnic cleansing and to bring the Serb government to the negotiating table. Ground forces may be required to facilitate and reinforce the resettlement of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, but this is a NATO decision.

On refugees, the Reform Party's blue book policy states:

The Reform Party supports accepting genuine refugees who find their way to Canada.

Kosovo Albanians are being displaced against their will and are clearly genuine refugees.

On other issues, the current NATO military action raises a number of important questions which Reform intends to raise at an appropriate time. These include: examination of NATO's changing role as an international police force; examination of the causes of Canada's diminishing role in international military decision making; examination of Canada's—

• (3200)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it being 8 a.m., the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8 a.m.)

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