

answer as soon as possible, so that perhaps I can recognize another member.

Mr. Mulroney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously any durable resolution of this matter will require discussion between Israel and the Palestinians on the one hand, and Israel and its Arab neighbours on the other. The Palestinian people, as I have indicated in the past, will choose their leaders and their organizations in regard to any participation.

• (1500)

But I must say on behalf of the government that anyone who has looked at the position of the current leadership of the PLO, particularly in its support of Saddam Hussein and its cheering of Scud missiles as they rained on Israel, would have to conclude that the PLO and its leader, Mr. Arafat, have been substantially if not completely discredited as a result of their own actions.

Our strong dissatisfaction with the PLO position and statements on the gulf crisis has been stressed over recent months during official contacts in this regard. We acknowledge that there is an important role for the Palestinians to choose their own leadership, but our enthusiasm for the present PLO leadership is zero.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, whether the Prime Minister or the government is enthusiastic is not my question.

I was asking: Does he agree with the sentiments expressed yesterday by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the PLO must have a role in helping to negotiate that?

It is a very important issue that is raised at this very sensitive time in trying to develop a peace resolution in the Middle East.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have just given the answer on behalf of the Government of Canada—

Mr. Simmons: No, you haven't.

An hon. member: It is an important issue.

Mr. Simmons: Explain that to Joe.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: If my hon. friend cares to examine it, he will see that there is nothing at all inconsistent in the

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principles that I have set out with the full context of the remarks of the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

This has been the position of the Government of Canada and it remains the position of the Government of Canada.

All parliamentarians, those who supported the deployment of Canadian troops to the gulf and those who opposed, will agree that the conduct of the organization purporting to represent the Palestinians has by its very own actions, in my judgment, discredited itself over the course of these very difficult last number of weeks.

I am telling my hon. friend that this is the position of the Government of Canada. We are looking for peace, a durable peace. That peace must respect the security of Israel and it must also accommodate the legitimate rights of Palestinians. This is the way a peaceful solution can be brought about and Canada is committed to that process.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF LEADER OF NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I gave you notice earlier today with regard to a question of privilege concerning the comments made by the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party, which we believe has misrepresented the proceedings of this House with regard to the debate on Motion No. 25, on television last night.

From time to time mistakes in point of fact can be made but the—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond is rising on a question of privilege which involves the leader of the New Democratic Party.

As he well knows as an experienced parliamentarian and as other members know, in a matter of this sort we usually try to make some effort to have both of the parties in the Chamber.

I wonder if the hon. member for Kamloops could give me some indication as to whether it would be appropriate to continue at this time, or whether he would ask that we arrange an appropriate time for this matter to be raised when the hon. leader of the New Democratic