

● (1450)

Three weeks ago at the White House he said:

I've been encouraged by the steps that you've taken Mr. President, in the past months when you proposed an interim solution different from the zero option, and when you proposed a series of confidence-building measures.

How can he equate that remark with his interview remarks in *The Toronto Star* that people are justified in believing the President is so warlike and hostile that he cannot be trusted?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, as to the Hon. Member's definition of a cheap shot being one that the other party is not able to respond to, I repeat what I just said to the Hon. Member and to the House, that I made these remarks in the United States and that if they cared to answer them they could. As a matter of fact, they have answered them. As a matter of fact, in the last months and more we have not seen that type of statement from the United States. That is why, when I was talking in the United States in the past couple of weeks, I indicated that I thought their current approach, notably their departure from the zero option to some intermediate stage, was a step in the right direction. But that does not explain why, over the past two years, there has been an increase in the peace movements in the various countries which I mentioned.

I repeat, I gave an explanation which I think the Hon. Member would hear from most peace movement leaders if he cared to talk to them. That is much of their motivation. They do not think that the United States people are warlike, but they are concerned that the leaders down there have made some statements which are not conducive to fruitful negotiations. I repeat, I made the same remark in discussions today to the Soviet leader who is visiting Canada.

PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS OF SOVIET LEADERS

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, cutting through the words of those answers, the fact remains that the Prime Minister has elaborated for the benefit of *The Toronto Star* on his distrust of President Reagan's policies and his doubt about the President's competency to deal with the Soviets. Would he give us now his candid opinions about Mr. Andropov and the trustworthiness of the Soviets in international relations? When he is doing that, and assuming that he uses similar language, would he explain how this trustworthiness has been demonstrated in Afghanistan and Poland, in the events leading up to the invasion of one country and the enormous Soviet pressure placed upon the other?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not think the question of the Hon. Member is one which I can be expected to justify. I am not an advocate. I do not carry a brief either for the United States or for the Soviet Union. If either side makes mistakes, I think it is the right and perhaps even the duty of the Canadian Government to point out those mistakes as seen from our point of view.

Oral Questions

If the Hon. Member has to make a case against the Soviet Union, or if other Members have a case to make against the United States, they should make it on their own feet without asking me to defend or to attack it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: I was asking the Prime Minister to give us, as Prime Minister, the benefit of his candid opinions. Since he has been so free in expressing those opinions about President Reagan, we expected him to express them similarly about the Soviets.

RUSSIAN SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in one more area, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he feels that the Soviets are more to be trusted in international negotiations than is the United States? With respect to his remarks about spheres of influence, which I believe was the phrase he used in *The Toronto Star* interview, that the Soviets wish to defend, and apparently the Prime Minister feels Americans ought to recognize, does he include recognition, as far as Canada's support of those policies are concerned, of those spheres of influence including Afghanistan, Poland, the Middle East and Central America, as among the spheres of influence that should be left to the Soviets?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, as regards the first part of the question, I would merely say that the interview which the Hon. Member may have read in *The Toronto Star* gives a series of statements that appear completely disjointed. I think the reader may have been misled by the fact that none of the questions is asked. *The Star* chose to reproduce my answers without even indicating that many of those answers were interspaced with convoluted and complicated questions. That may explain part of the impressions the Hon. Member has gained.

In so far as the second part of his question regarding spheres of influence is concerned, I think it is the duty of a country like Canada, which is not a great power and which has certain values it intends to see upheld in the world, to try to approach the actions of either great power in an even-handed way.

I was in the United States when President Reagan made his speech about Central America, which he described as his front yard. I guess that puts the Yukon in the back yard, but that is another matter. He described Central America as the front yard of the United States. I publicly supported that approach. I think the United States does have strategic interests, notably in that part of the hemisphere, that the Soviet Union should recognize and respect. But I say "even-handed" because I think the converse is true. If one can say that about the United States, which is a great power and has areas of strategic interest, I think one has to recognize the same thing about the Soviet Union, that it also has spheres of strategic interest.

Mr. Epp: In Afghanistan?

Mr. Trudeau: In Central America?