

ment have a right to know what our position is before any further commitments are made.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, they would indeed be serious contradictions if the statements were as related by my hon. friend. Let me just take the statement he imputed to our ambassador to the United States. He did not say that.

Mrs. Finestone: What did he say?

Mr. Mulroney: Read it and see what he said.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): We have read what he said.

Mr. Mulroney: Read the transcript. He did not say what my hon. friend has just imputed to him, as a result of which it is difficult to follow the rest of the logic.

There have been consistencies throughout our position, although I acknowledge to my hon. friend the situation in Bosnia is very fluid because of events that transpired in Athens at a moment when the United Nations was seeking ratification of that, looking for a vote within hours, that might mean the end for the moment or perhaps for a longer period of time to hostilities, while at the same time the United States was initiating its own policy in respect to action that might take place should Vance-Owen fail in Athens. Because of the time frames it was extremely delicate and difficult to take definitive positions.

I did however convey to both the President of the United States when he called me Saturday and to the Secretary General of the United Nations that our priority was the well-being of our men and women in Bosnia at the moment and that we wanted to make absolutely certain that any change in that mandate wherein Canadians would be affected would take place only pursuant to a new resolution brought to and approved by the Security Council of the United Nations.

I told the President of the United States and I told the Secretary General very carefully that our priority was precisely that and I obtained from them the assurance that those provisions I think I made on behalf of all Canadians would be fully respected.

Point of Order

PEACEKEEPING

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I will abbreviate my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Should an offensive military action become necessary, Canadians and our UN peacekeeping forces want to know if our forces will become part of this offensive action or will the UN peacekeeping troops be pulled out for their own safety?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is, as my hon. friend knows, a completely hypothetical question and I think it would be imprudent to answer it at this point because what we are hoping for is that our presence there at the moment, and we have one of the largest forces in the world on the ground in the former Yugoslavia, will help to persuade the recalibrants to sign Vance-Owen and precede the beginnings of an embryonic peace.

For me to speculate on what might happen should it fall apart and will we then be part of a military action would, I think, be counterproductive.

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POINT OF ORDER

MINISTER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made it a point as a matter of courtesy to ask the Minister of Veterans Affairs if she would be here in the House today. She assured me she would be.

I am informed by a reliable source that the minister was advised that it would be better if she was not in the House today.

• (1505)

Mr. Speaker: It is not a point of order. I cannot go into what discussion took place. The hon. member will have to pursue it in another way.

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WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table a Notice of Ways and Means