

Oral Questions

Yes, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member speaks of murder. We spoke of murder. However, I do not believe it was the intention of the people in the Kremlin to shoot down innocent passengers.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Well, they do over there, and that is the difference between that Party and this Party.

Mr. Stevens: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, we know that the Korean airliner was over Soviet air space for a matter of more than two hours. We know that all the maps indicate that when one is over that territory one can be shot down without warning. We know that the Soviet fighters tried to communicate and challenged the Korean airliner, asking if it was friend or foe.

Some Hon. Members: Nonsense!

Mr. Trudeau: We know that that communication did not get through. We know that two years ago there was a Korean airliner which went some thousands of miles into Soviet air space before being brought down. We do not want that to happen again. That is why we are taking positive steps in ICAO to try to ensure that communications of that kind not go by each other in the night, and that if one is challenged, "Friend or foe?" that there will be answer. This is important. For that reason I think that we should concentrate our efforts, (a) in trying to get compensation and, (b) in trying to ensure that this kind of tragic accident does not happen again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I was fascinated, Madam Speaker, at the Prime Minister's statement of the intentions of the Soviet Union, that it had absolutely no intention of shooting down that airliner.

Mr. Trudeau: I said "the people in the Kremlin."

Mr. Mulroney: The Kremlin. What is the difference? They had no intention of invading Afghanistan, either. They had no intention of invading Poland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR APOLOGY TO HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): Does the Prime Minister realize the gravity of sending the kind of clear signal that he has sent around the world to the Soviet Union, a signal which undermines the position taken by all civilized countries, which gravely undermines the position of our allies? Why does the Prime Minister not do one of two things? Either he should admit that he made a grave mistake in judgment, or he should apologize to the House for issuing a statement which runs counter to the resolution passed by the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, for about a month we expressed our indignation and outrage. I repeat that the Government has taken the lead in doing that, and it was in the forefront of all the nations of the world. Now, what did it get us and where are we, Madam Speaker? I ask the Leader of the Opposition, does he want to send a gunboat to shell Leningrad, or what?

Mr. Hees: We don't have one.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member wants to know the difference between the Kremlin and the pilot who shot down the Korean airline. There is a difference. I do not believe that the people in the Kremlin deliberately murdered or killed some 200 or 300 passengers in the Korean airliner. I do not believe that. I believe it was a tragic accident, an accident of war. It was caused, no doubt, by a reckless pilot and, no doubt, by a misguided commander on the ground. That is what I am afraid of, that the next war that awaits us will be started, not by the people in the Kremlin or by any other people, but, rather, by some accident of some pilot making the kind of tragic decision that he made, and the people on the ground making that tragic decision. That is why I am worried.

I can express indignation just as well as the Leader of the Opposition. The difference is that we have done it before him and we have done it before other nations. Now I think there should be some effort to re-establish communications with the Soviets. I, for one, think that it is in that direction that the superpowers must go. They must try to find some way to stop shouting at each other, when the world is teetering on the brink of disaster and atomic war.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I must ask the House to refrain from manifesting itself in this way or we will not get through the Question Period, and I must also ask that everyone try to be brief in their interventions. I now recognize the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Mulroney: Madam Speaker, Hon. Members on this side of the House, and I include my friends in the NDP, have no lessons to take from the Prime Minister or his colleagues about our commitment to peace. Of that, we are absolutely certain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1430)

CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC NOTE

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): The implication was that the Kremlin did not wilfully do this. If that is the case, why does the Prime Minister not secure from those people who did not wilfully do this at least the acceptance of our note and compensation paid to the Canadians who were affected by it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!