

Points of Order

We find out today that Belgium, a member of NATO, has called for the withdrawal of some 26,000 troops from West Germany. The Minister of Defence in Belgium said that NATO was not responding fast enough to changing events in Europe.

I now put the question again to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Will he also show courage and creativity in attempting to bring about the end of the cold war by announcing that not only will cruise missile testing come to an end in Canada but they will not continue with the designation of Goose Bay as a low-level training flight facility?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was naturally intrigued when I saw that report. I have checked into it. I understand that Belgian officials say that the Minister of Defence in that country was misreported by his media. That, of course, would never happen in this country. I am looking to determine exactly what was said and I will naturally bring it to the attention of the hon. member whose interest I understand.

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POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise hon. members that we will take, I understand, a very short point of order from the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs followed by the usual question on business matters by the hon. member for Windsor West. Then we will have a question rising out of yesterday by the Minister of Finance followed by the member for Calgary West.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I have two separate points of order which I would like to pursue separately with your agreement.

The first is that I misled the House and falsely accused the member for Winnipeg Transcona of wearing a microphone at the New Democratic Party convention. That was inadvertent. I was wrong. I apologize to him and I apologize to the House for misleading it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) suggested that, with the unanimous consent of the House, the statement he wanted to make this morning could be tabled and appended to *Hansard*. I only want to say that we agree as

long as the official opposition is also allowed to table its response.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): If I can speak for my government, we agree. I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a copy of my statement.

[*English*]

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs, I would like to draw your attention to comments made by the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

In the heat of debate he called the right hon. gentleman an idiot. Sir, I believe that is language unbecoming a member of the House of Commons. I believe that he would do the honourable thing at this time and apologize.

Mr. Speaker: I must say that in all the years that I have been here, of course, I have never heard anyone called an idiot in this place. I am sure that the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona may have thought that. If he uttered it, of course, I think it would be appropriate if he withdrew. But I, of course, will hear from my friend.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, only those things which are on the record and which Mr. Speaker hears are the things that people normally withdraw. But I did say what I said and I said it after the minister said what he just withdrew.

And so, having withdrawn it, I will do likewise.

Mr. Speaker: I am compelled to return to a matter of a minute or so ago. I would ask that the Secretary of State for External Affairs just remain for a moment.

I must ask the House if there is agreement that the Right Hon. Secretary of State table his comments. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: On the other hand, it seemed to me that that consent was given with a condition on the part of the Official Opposition at least.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, my recollection is that we are allowing the Secretary of State for External Affairs to table his statement in the House immediately. We will have up to six o'clock to table our own because I was to respond spontaneously to the minister. I now have to draft my response, which I do not mind, but normally I speak with just a few notes. So it is subject to this condition that we will agree.