

exchange we had last Wednesday relative to the situation in Iran, which has deteriorated to the point at which the Secretary General of the United Nations has now convened a meeting of the Security Council.

● (1415)

Could the Prime Minister, within the bounds of propriety, report to the House on any of the initiatives we discussed last week and which he indicated he would attempt to follow up?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can. There was a proposal from the Leader of the Opposition or the House leader of the opposition that we might want to consider consultations with the summit nations at Tokyo. We have considered that possibility, as I indicated we would, and we have come to the view that since all of the summit nations have made their position unmistakably clear in expressing concern about the implications for international law of what is occurring in Iran, there is not a further useful initiative that could be taken there.

We have, however, turned our attention to the activities which might be launched in relation to the Commonwealth, and we are giving some thought to activities which might be launched in relation to Francophone communities to ensure that, as much as possible, those organizations will express their concern about the breach of international law in a public way.

There is a meeting being convened in London at which the High Commissioner for Canada will make a recommendation to other members of the Commonwealth that the Secretary General of the Commonwealth be empowered to make a declaration reflecting the consensus of Commonwealth High Commissioners' views. We are also taking other action at the United Nations.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think the House is very grateful that these initiatives have been taken by the government following some suggestions which were made here last Wednesday.

I might indicate to the Prime Minister that in our view it is not enough that each country, singly, whether a member of the summit or not, indicate its indignation over the breach of international law. As I indicated last week, it seems to me that in dealing with international terrorism, as in hijacking, it is not enough that each country act alone and take its position. It is essential, as we found out when we attempted to deal with hijacking, that each undertake to do certain things concerning others so that we act as a bloc.

We in Canada have always said that we were the closest friends and allies of the United States. It seems to me that what is called for now is a collective decision and a collective announcement, perhaps by the summit leaders, that if any harm comes to any of the American hostages held by Iranian action, then we will consider it as though harm had been done to our own citizens. If each member of the summit were to say that, it would seem to me that the Iranian government and those who are indignant at this action would see the consequences of their action in terms of future peace in the world.

Oral Questions

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I am certain the right hon. Leader of the Opposition shares my view that what we must do in this circumstance is to determine those actions which will be most productive for Canada to take. There is no question at all that it will be useful for Canada to bring to bear the influence of certain blocs. That is why we have proceeded with the Commonwealth; that is why we are looking at the possibility of proceeding through Francophone communities; that is why we are working at the United Nations.

It has been our judgment that it is not probable that there will be effective new action which could be taken by the seven summit nations as a bloc and which could accomplish more than the individual actions taken by Canada and the other members to the summit community on our own.

In light of the renewed representation by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, naturally I will be prepared to review that question again to see if there is anything new and useful which could be done by the seven summit nations acting together.

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, one would assume that several of these summit nations are aware that they depend on oil supplies from Iran. The United States no longer depends on it, in the sense that they have decided not to take it. But each of the other summit nations must be tempted in some way to put its self-interests in getting oil from Iran ahead of its desire to see the United States emerge victorious from this conflict of power.

By way of a question—and perhaps not even asking the Prime Minister to answer the question today—has the Prime Minister considered and has he in effect got on the phone to talk to Helmut Schmidt, Giscard d'Estaing, Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister Ohira or the Prime Minister of Italy, because once harm is done to these hostages there is no guarantee that the United States will not say, "Well, nobody is willing to help us in this and we must act alone"?

● (1420)

Mr. Clark: The right hon. Leader of the Opposition will know that four of the nations represented at the summit were party to the very strong and unequivocal statement issued by the European Parliament, at which time that group of nations acting as a bloc, and a more representative group than the summit nations, indicated their concern.

As I said to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition a moment ago, in light of his renewed representation we will be prepared to see if there is any further action that might be productive for the summit nations to take, either individually or as a bloc, that would have a positive result in Iran and which cannot be achieved through other means.

LEVEL AT WHICH INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES HAVE EXPRESSED OPINION

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister in a sense answered a portion of the question which I wanted to put to him, namely, at what