

Oral Questions

had time to ascertain whether he asked specifically to test the Cruise or whether he was talking about a testing weapons system generally, and whether the reference to that by the former Secretary of State for External Affairs was not based upon an inaccurate memory of what President Carter had requested. I cannot say, but I will certainly undertake to have either the Secretary of State for External Affairs or myself find out the precise terms of President Carter's request.

I know since 1980, since President Reagan has been President and since we have formed the Government, that the discussion has been, and the request of the United States has been in terms of general weapons testing.

I recognize, as I believe the Minister recognized, that in people's minds there was often an identification of the Cruise with the general umbrella agreement. But in terms of what the United States requested and in terms of what Cabinet authorized, it was a general weapons testing. Cabinet made the specific point that when the Cruise came up to be requested we would ask the Minister of National Defence to bring that specifically to Cabinet to be discussed under the umbrella agreement.

FORMER MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, something very significant is being said here because the former Secretary of State for External Affairs could not have been more categorical in his wording. He referred to a Cabinet decision. He did not refer to a weapons system test in general. He referred very specifically to the Cruise missile. The missile system referred to in my motion for debate that day included the Cruise missile.

The Minister in his speech went on to speak at some length on why Canada was an appropriate terrain for testing the Cruise missile and, I repeat, with specific reference to a Cabinet decision, the Minister of Justice said:

Following the decision of 1979, President Carter requested some 18 months ago that we allow one of the proposed missile systems, the Cruise missile system, to be tested in Canada. It is the Carter request, which was subsequently adopted by the Reagan administration, which has been accepted by the Canadian cabinet.

Nothing could be more precise than that. Therefore I ask the Prime Minister whether he is now saying that there is no such agreement with the United States. Is he now saying it is quite possible in the future of the country that we will not be testing the Cruise missile?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, on the latter point, yes, it is quite possible, but that is purely hypothetical. On the specific point made by the Hon. Member, I would want to refer him to my previous answer, particularly when he quoted the former Secretary of State as saying that it was the Carter request which was subsequently adopted by the Reagan administration. With respect, I think that that is a misunderstanding or a misstatement. As far as I have been able to verify, since 1980 what the Reagan administration has been asking is a missile weapons testing agreement.

In communications I have seen it has been expressed in those terms, not in terms of the Cruise.

Mr. Broadbent: Why did he go on to talk about the Cruise in his speech?

Mr. Trudeau: Because, as I said in my previous answer, for many people, once they have accepted the umbrella agreement the Cruise is the thing they fear will happen. Most of the opposition today, vocal opposition, is on the Cruise. That is the subject which is in everyone's mind.

Once again, what has been signed by the present Secretary of State for External Affairs, what has been discussed and passed in Cabinet is a weapons testing agreement. We make no effort to hide the fact that the Cruise is one of the weapons which will interest the United States and, as I said, we made specific mention in the Cabinet decision that when that request came up—therefore it was obvious that we felt it was likely to come up—the Minister of Defence should come back to Cabinet before acting under the umbrella agreement.

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MINES AND MINING

FUTURE OF CYPRUS ANVIL MINE AT FARO, Y.T.

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development I will direct my question to the Minister of State for Mines. The Minister will know that all mining operations in Yukon are now shut down. The largest of these, the Cyprus Anvil mine at Faro, which accounts for 40 per cent of the Yukon economy, has been closed for more than eight months. The people have not only had to endure economic hardships but they have also had to contend with cruel promises from the Government which promised to help revive the mine more than five months ago. To date those promises have not been fulfilled.

On February 1 the vice-president of Cyprus Anvil said that a deal with the federal Government would be completed and mine workers would be back to work by the end of this month. Will the Minister here and today announce what deal the mining company has achieved with the Government of Canada in order to get these mine workers back to work and the economy of Yukon on the move again?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): No, Madam Speaker, and I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that negotiations have been going on for quite some time. All Government programs which are available to the unemployed in Canada, including miners, are available to miners in the Cyprus Anvil operation.

Mr. Siddon: Madam Speaker, what the Minister says is that the Federal Government is prepared to stand by and watch the economy of Yukon crumble.