

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TERRORISM

SEIZURE OF TURKISH EMBASSY IN OTTAWA—SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in refusing in clear terms to answer questions about protection of foreign missions arising from the Turkish Embassy tragic incident, the Deputy Prime Minister said that he was trying to protect national security in not giving us clear answers. My suggestion to him is that he cynically tried to cover up government incompetence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): He told us that a month ago security over the Turkish Embassy had been reviewed. He did not tell us what we have learned from Ankara, that 10 days ago the Government was advised by the Turkish Government to increase protection at the Turkish Embassy. Since the Deputy Prime Minister advised this House that he is in charge of these matters rather than the Solicitor General, did he tell the Prime Minister of the warning from the Turkish Government about increased terrorism, and did he, or the Prime Minister, then order increased surveillance over the Turkish Embassy?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I can understand, as I am sure all Hon. Members of this House can understand, the shock and dismay of the Turkish Government in Ankara over the events with respect to the incident at the Turkish Embassy here. However, that does not alter for a moment the facts as I have described them in response to the questions yesterday, that an intensive review was undertaken, not 10 days ago, but last month. I can assure him that was the communication that we had directly with the Turkish Government through its Embassy. After that intensive review, the Turkish Government, through its Embassy, a month ago expressed its satisfaction with the security arrangements which were made with the Turkish Government through its Embassy at that time, a month ago.

RCMP REPORT—STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO SOLICITOR GENERAL

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are referring to a communiqué apparently directly from the Turkish Government in Ankara, 10 days ago. If, as the Deputy Prime Minister attempted to explain to the House yesterday, in answering a question on whether or not the RCMP report on the international terrorism situation in Canada has or has not been implemented, that to answer that question would offend national security, which is what he suggested—he claimed that any statement on the matter would jeopardize security—why did the Solicitor General, when he left this House yesterday, tell reporters that that same

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report had not yet been considered by Cabinet? If security is indeed involved, will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether that statement by the Solicitor General was a breach of national security?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the right hon. gentleman knows after my responses to him yesterday, I made the offer to him and the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who was in his seat at the time yesterday, certainly not the day before when a similar offer was made to him, to brief them fully as Privy Councillors with respect to the ramifications of all of these matters, but they chose not to follow that constructive course. They choose not to be a part of finding effective solutions. They choose rather to urge us, as a responsible Government, to make disclosure of security arrangements which are being recommended or are to be considered for the protection of our embassies. I do not think that is helpful at all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

CABINET REVIEW INQUIRY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, that is absolute nonsense. What the Deputy Prime Minister suggested was that he take me and the Leader of the New Democratic Party into his confidence under oath, hoping that this question would disappear from the floor of the House of Commons. This question will not disappear from the floor of the House of Commons.

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker, this is an important question. The Deputy Prime Minister told me three times yesterday that the RCMP report on increased terrorism had been acted upon. He said he told me that three times. Then, in response to my colleague, the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount, he said—

Mr. de Cotret: You got it right.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I always get it right. He said that it would not be in the interests of national security to say whether or not the report had been acted upon. This occurred about 15 minutes later. Then the Solicitor General left the House and said that that report had not been acted upon and had not even been considered by the Cabinet.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): My question—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Now that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has arrived at his question, please let him put it.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I know your patience is elastic because of the seriousness of the issue.