

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CENTRAL AMERICA—PEACEKEEPING PROCESS—POSSIBLE
CANADIAN PARTICIPATION

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. According to news reports Canada's peacekeeping assistance is desired in Central America. Has the Government received a formal request, supported by all five Governments in the region, for Canadian peacekeeping personnel? If so, for what period of time is Canada prepared to commit such personnel?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have not received such a formal request. I had the opportunity last week to meet, at their invitation, with the five Ambassadors or heads of mission of the Central American countries involved in the Arias peace plan. I indicated to them again, as I had last year during my visit to Central America, that Canada is interested in doing what we can to move forward the peace process in that region, and that we would certainly be prepared, if requested, to help in the design of a peacekeeping arrangement that might advance that process.

That is where the matter stands as of today.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

TAMIL REFUGEE CLAIMANT—ALLEGATION CONTAINED IN
NEWSPAPER REPORT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Last week Canadians were treated to an alarming degree of government incompetence in the awarding of landed immigrant status to a convicted terrorist. Today another report in *The Globe and Mail* reveals that both RCMP and Immigration failed to act on another case involving a Tamil refugee living in our country who is wanted by the West German police and Interpol on charges of "preparing an explosive attack".

Therefore I would like to ask a question of the Minister. Given that a warrant for his arrest was issued by West Germany in 1986, and that Immigration officials discovered this fact through an Interpol alert last fall, at which time they alerted the RCMP, can the Minister explain to the House why, during a period of almost six months, the Government failed to take any meaningful action and why the Government did not even bother to contact and question the individual in order to respond to Interpol and to ensure that there was no breach of Canadian security?

Oral Questions

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to clarify the story to which the Hon. Member is referring.

I can advise the Hon. Member that indeed the West Germans did contact the RCMP in the fall of 1987. We did give them the information which they requested, and they have not requested anything further of us since that time.

I can also advise the Hon. Member that at the time the West Germans did contact us they told us that there was a warrant out wishing his presence in Germany as a witness only. There were no charges whatsoever laid against him.

I can further advise the Hon. Member that as of this past Friday that warrant had been withdrawn, and there is absolutely nothing outstanding against this gentleman at this time.

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I think Canadians, and myself, are reassured to learn of that information. However, I should like to ask a question of the Minister.

If in fact Interpol requested assistance of our Government, if there were an arrest order by the West German Government, one would have thought that surely it would have been incumbent upon the Government at least to contact and question the individual in order to respond adequately and expeditiously. That was not done.

Why did the Government have to wait until last evening upon interviewing the individual? That only came after the individual volunteered information to the Government, as opposed to the Government of Canada trying to solicit the necessary information six months ago to make a determination that no Canadian lives were in danger because of the possibilities as communicated by Interpol then. I ask him to compare that with what he knows now.

• (1450)

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): With the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, that is simply not accurate.

At the time the gentleman in question first arrived in Canada which was the summer, 1986, we inquired of the West German authorities if they had any charges or information on him and we were advised by them that they did not. When they requested information on him in the fall, 1987, we gave it immediately and expeditiously. They requested nothing further from us.

I can tell you that as of today, Mr. Speaker, there are no warrants outstanding against this gentleman. In any event he was only wanted as a witness, never as a participant in any crime.