

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, not only is the Government standing up for the sovereignty of the nation, but indeed northern Canada as well, much to the chagrin of the Hon. Member.

The fact of the matter is that it is a disputed area. My understanding is that the position of the United States has been that there would be no such drilling activity, as is suggested by the Hon. Member, until the issue is resolved. That position remains the same.

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[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REQUEST THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA BE SEVERED

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Would he agree that the most flagrant attacks on human rights take place in South Africa? On the weekend, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other church leaders were temporarily detained by government authorities. Some time ago, the Prime Minister stated that if necessary, he would not hesitate to break off diplomatic relations with this country. Considering recent events, does he not think the time has come to take that action?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, of course we earnestly deplore the deterioration of an already unacceptable situation in South Africa. The action taken against church leaders over the weekend was particularly reprehensible. The Canadian Government, through the Secretary of State for External Affairs, has already made known its feelings of profound indignation regarding this development. The South African Ambassador has been called to the Department of External Affairs for a meeting that will take place within the next few hours, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs will probably have some new statements to make upon his return to the House. I must say I fully share the views expressed by the Hon. Member and speaking for all Members, I must say I deplore a situation that becoming increasingly unacceptable and intolerable for all those who believe in democracy for South Africa.

[English]

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON ACTIVITIES OF OPPOSITION GROUPS

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister realize that the South African Government, by banning the political activities of 18 opposition groups, has literally made a declaration of war on peace, justice, and human rights? How far does the situation have to deteriorate

before the Canadian Government takes the appropriate action?

In answer to my first question, the Prime Minister stated that he is calling in the South African Ambassador and that he will wait for the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make a statement. Does the Prime Minister not have this responsibility, and should he not make the statement right away in the House?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that few people would accuse the Government of Canada of not having provided leadership in regard to the reprehensible situation which exists in South Africa. In fact, if there is an element of tragedy that enters into this, it is the general regret of all Canadians that the actions taken by the Government in this House were not taken some years ago so as to provide more pronounced and dramatic leadership.

I indicated that the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who was instrumental in providing this leadership, is unfortunately out of the House for the day. He has instructed that the South African Ambassador be called in, in order that the Government of Canada may convey to him directly the profound regret, dissatisfaction, and dismay of all Canadians at this progressive deterioration in an already explosive situation.

We are following it. We are monitoring it hour by hour. We have excluded no options. We have excluded no alternatives. We will act in the interests of those of our allies, and the people of South Africa, at the most appropriate moment.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT SEVER ALL ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. I am sure the Prime Minister would have to agree that the events that have been occurring over the last few days in South Africa constitute a reiteration of the events before the rise of Nazism in Germany.

There are neo-Nazis demonstrating in the street with the sympathy of the Government, clerics are being arrested, all political activity by every significant black organization is banned, and we hear words like "remorse", "regret", and "dissatisfaction" being used.

Is it not time that the Prime Minister lived up to his commitment given at the United Nations that, if there was not progress made toward the dismantling of apartheid, the Government would sever all economic relations with South Africa?

The Secretary of State has stated that he has in his vest pocket additional sanctions to be imposed. Will the Government not impose them now? Will the Government not bring home the Canadian Ambassador to South Africa to discuss with him the status that should continue with respect to the Canadian Embassy in that country?