

*Oral Questions***LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS**

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister specifically, in an attempt to really demonstrate not just a commitment but action and that we believe the cold war is over, will the Prime Minister now agree to stop low-level flights in this country, to stop cruise missile testing over the north?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think, as I indicated to the House the other day, and as many members from all parties have indicated, we are entering a new and important era of relationships between east and west. We should be sensitive to all opportunities for change. We should not reject ideas out of hand simply because they have not been tried before or they have been tried and found wanting.

I agree with the openness of the approach suggested by my hon. friend. I draw to her attention the comments made to me and the Secretary of State for External Affairs by President Gorbachev. He said that the most imprudent thing that could be done at this time, given the enormity of the changes in eastern Europe, would be changes in the structures of the alliances because at this particular time any such changes could be destabilizing with regard to the efforts that he and others are trying to bring about.

So while I take good note of the comments made by my hon. friend, I point out that the progress we have made so far, and it has been remarkable in the last number of years, has been brought about in large measure because of the leadership of President Gorbachev on the one side, but the solidarity of NATO on the other. We propose to keep that.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Prime Minister is aware of the remarks by his former ambassador on disarmament who said that, in fact, we are following the United States on disarmament issues. I am suggesting we take the lead. I may be new at it but it seems to me that leadership means leading from the front and not the back.

[*Translation*]

This is a historic moment. Canada must assume her rightful role as world peace leader. Now is the time to come up with constructive and positive suggestions. Why would the government not take this opportunity to

display leadership by proposing measures over which we have direct control?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, to answer the question properly, I must quote from an interview given by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Shervardnadze, on November 23, where he said, according to the English translation:

[*English*]

“As the Soviet leader stressed,—”

[*Translation*]

That was the interview granted by Mr. Shevardnadze.

[*English*]

“—the Canadian Prime Minister’s visit to the U.S.S.R. ranks among the events which help to change the world situation with a focus on a better future—The political declaration signed by the leaders of Canada and the U.S.S.R. is an intellectual and political breakthrough into the new interdependent world”, and so on.

[*Translation*]

We have done two things as a government. First, we made a series of specific recommendations—seven, if I am not mistaken—for building bridges of friendship and realistic relations between the two blocs and, as Mr. Shevardnaze said so well, we have changed our attitude significantly. We will maintain this forward-looking position along with the positions which the hon. member will announce in this House.

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• (1450)

TREASURY BOARD

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board who intends to put hospital service workers and ships crews back to work. These workers have been providing emergency services during the strike in spite of the government’s tyrannical action over the past two years to force them to accept pitiful salaries. How can the government justify this back-to-work legislation?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): As I was saying yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the informal negotiations which started several months ago are continuing. I said yesterday that if we could reach a negotiated settlement, I would favour this solution over a legislated settlement. I am still prepared, day or night, to meet the union leaders to try and reach a settlement