

States on the subject of Libya? Did he ask for evidence to justify the action taken by the U.S.? What kind of answer did he get? Did he suggest any alternatives for other options? Could the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House what he said and tell us what kind of questions he put to the President of the United States?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman obviously has not read both statements to which I referred which were issued by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government Monday evening and yesterday morning. He obviously was not listening yesterday, nor was he listening to me, or he would have heard that we have been in touch with the United States Government all along.

I do not know where the right hon. gentleman finds inconsistency in what we have been saying repeatedly, which is the same thing.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I suggest to the Deputy Prime Minister that press statements are no substitute for facing the people of Canada through their representatives in the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is there a question?

CANADIAN WORKERS IN LIBYA

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Would he not consider it hypocritical on the part of the Canadian Government to condemn terrorism at one of its sources in Libya, yet allow Canadians to work in that country as technical experts to help the economy which funds that terrorism? Is that not a hypocritical position?

● (1420)

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many times this has to be repeated before it sinks in. On January 10 the Prime Minister started with a full, complete, and detailed statement at that time with respect to Canadians in Libya. Our primary concern throughout has been the safety of Canadians. As recently as a few minutes before walking into the House, the situation is that there are no Canadians who have been injured, killed or affected, nor has their safety been affected in Libya.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quatra): They've been told to stay indoors now.

Mr. Nielsen: However, they have to look to their own assessment of the circumstances, as they were urged to do on January 10, and again last Friday because of the changing circumstances.

Oral Questions

ROLE OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. How can the Deputy Prime Minister leave it to Canadians working in Libya to assess their own situation when it is supposed to be the position of the Government that it does not condone Libyan terrorism? Obviously the economic system there finances that terrorism. How can it tell Canadians it is up to them to stay there and, potentially at least, support that terrorist activity?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Sir, one might put this question to the hon. gentleman: would the Hon. Member evacuate all Canadians from Libya, even against their will, notwithstanding the fact that we have the assurance of the Government of Libya that they will be protected, and notwithstanding the fact that there is no indication of any threat against any Canadian in that country?

SANCTIONS AGAINST LIBYA

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Does he realize that there is another issue here other than the safety of Canadians? Is the Government serious about effective action against Libya by way of sanctions? If it is, how can it condone and allow Canadians to keep the Libyan oil industry going, the revenues from which support Mr. Khadafy's actions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): That is simply not correct, Sir. If the hon. gentleman will refer to the statement of January 10 he will see that there were sanctions imposed. Indeed, among our allies Canada has been in the vanguard in leading us toward a solution to the vicious cycle of terrorism. Certainly what is in issue is getting at the root causes of terrorism and finding a cure. But paramount to all considerations here, surely must be the well-being and safety of Canadians in that country at this moment.

[Translation]

INQUIRY IF PRIME MINISTER MADE FIRM SUGGESTIONS BEFORE UNITED STATES DECIDED ON USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST LIBYA

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the same subject. Yesterday, the Prime Minister said outside the House:

[English]

We urge—a renewal of efforts by all concerned to reach negotiated settlements to the tensions that have long plagued the Middle East.