

*The Address—Mr. Mulroney**[English]*

I have not been a Member long, Mr. Speaker, but I am convinced that we need to restore this Chamber as an instrument for seeking national consensus on the challenge we face in foreign affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Not everything need be defined in narrow partisan or adversarial politics. Indeed, in a very real sense, this Chamber and its instruments should be the centre for the promotion of arms control and disarmament programs here in Canada. New initiatives could be more ennobling and fewer still could bring more comfort to Canadians who regard this Chamber sometimes with bewilderment. This is an excellent occasion for the Prime Minister to initiate a process which will bring honour to this place and honour to those who serve it.

While I welcome with generosity the Prime Minister's support for a centre for disarmament, the same motive which caused him to introduce it in the first place, I would ask him to consider sending his proposals to a committee of this House. In that way interested groups and individuals throughout Canada may be heard. Indeed, the committee might recommend that such a disarmament centre report directly to Parliament, and that might be all to the good.

Canada has for many years taken pride in its ability to play the role of honest broker in world affairs. This is a valid and important role for Canada. The Prime Minister's initiative is, in my judgment, intended to be in this tradition, and for that reason I salute him today for this as I have had the occasion of doing elsewhere.

It is with some concern and absolutely no sense of partisanship, Mr. Speaker, that I note an apparent confusion, inadvertent or otherwise, in the Prime Minister's statements between, on the one hand, the role of an alliance member, and on the other some neutralist observer of international affairs. That confusion arises, I believe, from the Prime Minister's apparent willingness, without malice, to understate the value of some very important principles in the hope of making progress with his proposals for peace.

I tell you clearly, Mr. Speaker, we are a western nation, a member of NATO. We are committed to the ideals of individual and collective freedom. We are children of liberty and on these principles we cannot and shall not compromise.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we as Canadians are prepared to accept neither the inexorable Finlandization of Europe, nor a neutralist Canada. We in the Western Alliance are prepared to defend ourselves against attempts to oppose alien and odious systems on us through the use of force or threats of force. There is nothing, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing, that is bellicose in a suggestion that we view Soviet intentions realistically. Soviet policy in Europe has been animated by two clear aims: the preservation of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe, and the weakening of the Western

Alliance, especially the links between the United States and Europe. Political leadership on all sides of the House—it involves all of us—must be ever vigilant to avoid becoming a pawn in this Soviet strategy. That is why NATO should quite properly be the forum for our initiatives.

In Toronto last December, prior to the departure of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) for Brussels, I asked him to urge further consideration of the existing non-first-strike policy within the private councils of NATO foreign ministers. I recognize the sensitive nature of my urgings and I want to return to the substance of that in a moment. The forum of private NATO ministerial meetings is equally important. That is the forum in which to discuss fundamental NATO policy or any proposed changes thereto.

● (1210)

The Prime Minister, commenting on my Toronto remarks in the House last December 9, chided me for going as far as I did, saying it would be better if I reserved this kind of discussion for the NATO forum, which, he went on to say, "we are doing". I was, therefore, disturbed by two aspects of the Prime Minister's recent tour of Warsaw Pact capitals.

[Translation]

First, while discussion within the councils of the Alliance is one thing, it is quite another matter to publicly—in the course of this tour of Warsaw pact countries—call into question the determination of NATO allies to carry out existing policies of the Alliance. There is a difference. As former French Prime Minister Barre pointed out, to do so is to undermine the foundation of security in Europe and the credibility on which collective security rests. Second, I was astonished to learn that the Prime Minister and Chairman Honecker of East Germany had agreed to establish a committee of officials and ministers "to work together to sort of identify the areas where we can agree."

Such consultation, without first communicating with this House, without prior communication, as far as I know, with our allies, outside the Alliance framework, can only lead to confusion and potential miscalculation.

The cornerstone of our security, Mr. Speaker, is NATO solidarity. But the Prime Minister's attitude as expressed last week in Davos and Eastern Europe is part of a pattern which, if I may say so, has characterized his Government's approach to defence and the Alliance.

[English]

In April, 1969 the Prime Minister unilaterally cut our NATO commitment very substantially saying that Canada had no foreign policy of any importance except that which flowed from NATO, and that this is a false perspective for any country. Under the Government defence spending as a percentage of GNP has been cut by 38 per cent. This is germane to the proposition. The policy of wilful neglect of our contribution to the collective security of the alliance has led to a situation in which Canada spends less per capita on defence