

*Government Orders*

This bill drives a hole through the government's policies and constraints on arms sales around the world that directly led to the horror of the gulf war, that directly led to the massacre of millions of people in this century. A policy was proclaimed by the Prime Minister in February. Let us listen to the words, first of all, of the government in its official policy statement set out in September 1990. The Arms Control and Disarmament Division of External Affairs prepared a document outlining the Canadian position. That document says that it is Canada's objective:

— to ensure that Canadian military exports do not contribute to the violation of human rights nor to the exacerbation of conflict, while ensuring that we meet our requirements for national security and obligations for collective defence.

Further:

Canada believes that increased restraint by all states with respect to the transfer of arms would contribute to the promotion of peace and security, particularly, in the areas of actual or potential conflict.

The House of Commons defence committee said earlier this year, following the gulf war in a report released in April:

Governments have a responsibility to exercise controls over military equipment, from its design to its sale or transfer and wherever possible, to its ultimate end use.

However, listen to the words of the Prime Minister, who said on March 13 the following:

There is a general view, without getting into the question of a total interdiction for the moment, that clearly a lot of these weapons, to understate the case, fell into the hands that should never have had them in the first place. We could be much more active in that area if we wanted. We have all the technology in the world. We have all the resources we need.

This is the Prime Minister speaking. He continued:

We could be big arms merchants. We have chosen not to be, although it is a very lucrative business. We have chosen not to be, because it is fundamentally inconsistent with our policy, to develop it, to peddle it, to finance it, and then to deplore its use.

• (1110)

That is a direct quote from the Prime Minister of Canada. What happened to his policy? Where did it disappear to?

The minister has carefully explained that behind this bill are two immediate potential sales of arms for Canadians and for Canadian companies or Canadian based companies. The first is the potential sale of

automatic weapons to the Netherlands. The other is the sale of 1,117 light armoured vehicles by a General Motors plant in London to Saudi Arabia.

The significance of this bill is that it would permit those light armoured vehicles to be armed with automatic weapons. Without that waiver of the Criminal Code, this deal is not likely, at least in a complete way, to come to the plant in London.

In attempting to justify this deal, the minister says that these are not weapons of mass destruction. What I say to the minister is that in this century more people have been killed by automatic weapons than any other weapon invented by humanity, and most of those who were killed were civilians. How can the government say that this is not a weapon of mass destruction?

The weapons that are going to be mounted on these light armoured vehicles and sold to Saudi Arabia are almost certainly going to be used by that country in controlling its own people. What kind of country is this going to?

Let us listen to the report from Amnesty International on Saudi Arabia:

At least 27 prisoners of conscience were imprisoned and other prisoners of conscience may have been among more than 70 detainees held without charge or trial. Some political detainees were held without trial in prolonged incommunicado detention. Torture was reported common and one death in custody may have been caused by torture or ill-treatment. Sentences of amputation and flogging continued to be imposed and carried out. At least 111 people were executed, 16 of them for political offences.

Information about political prisoners was limited because of strict official censorship and restrictions on freedom of movement within the country and access from abroad.

Let us look at the United States Senate report and that of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990*. It states about Saudi Arabia:

There were no significant developments in human rights in 1990; significant restrictions remain on the freedoms of speech and press, peaceful assembly and association, religion, the right of citizens to change their government, women's rights and worker rights. There were credible reports in 1990 of the mistreatment of prisoners and incommunicado detention.

We all learned unfortunately during the gulf war a little more of the kind of regime that there is in Saudi Arabia.