

So in this sense the real question before us is how can we best achieve policies which reduce the recourse to nuclear weapons in Europe and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, my party and I approach this most important question through three fundamental principles.

First, Canada's foreign policy should, in fact it should always, but especially on matters of grave importance internationally, rest on a bi-partisan search for consensus.

Second, the cornerstone of our security is NATO solidarity, and third, only through the strengthening of the non-nuclear deterrent can we reduce the present reliance on nuclear weapons.

[English]

If I may elaborate, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has spoken eloquently and well of the need for reducing East-West tension. We share this view. As I indicated last November 14 and many times since in the House, my Party and I have consistently wished him, as Prime Minister of Canada, well in all of his initiatives. The maintenance of peace is critical to every hope we have for Canada and to every dream we have for Canadians. We support the objectives of the Prime Minister's initiatives and welcome his report to Parliament on this important matter which has so preoccupied—and understandably so—his attention in recent months.

Until now—and I say this much more in sorrow than in anger—Parliament has had to glean its information from a political platform in Montreal where the Prime Minister elaborated on some proposals, and from the reception halls of Eastern Europe where some blanks were filled in. We regret this disregard for Parliament. We regret that the Prime Minister, embarking on an honourable initiative, failed to equip himself in a way which would have given his initiative enormous additional credibility.

The missing dimension, if I may, Mr. Speaker, in the Prime Minister's approach has been a formal endorsement of his proposals and the inclusion of, perhaps, yet others equally valuable by all Members of this House of Commons, who deserve to be consulted on a regular and ongoing basis about such matters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: In my speech of December 4, I urged the Prime Minister to introduce such a resolution and I am sure that, had he done so, it would have gained the unanimous approval of every Member of this House of Commons. I assure him that if he chose to do so today, our endorsement of his proposals and initiatives would be no less enthusiastic. With such an endorsement—and I think it is important, Mr. Speaker—the Prime Minister could quite properly have dismissed as unworthy any suggestion about any partisan implication in such an approach. With such a mandate, the Prime Minister could have properly claimed the support of all Canadians from all Parties, in all regions of this country, for a worth while initiative.

The Address—Mr. Mulroney

I call upon the Prime Minister again. He indicated that it was his intention to undertake further trips. I wish him well in that, and I call upon the Prime Minister again to bring forward an appropriate resolution so that Members from all corners of this House may consider it and give him the kind of overwhelming endorsement which will help him along his way.

● (1200)

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that such formal support of all Members for a peace initiative has other practical and positive consequences. As a reflection of the unanimous support of this House, all-Party, non-partisan delegations to disarmament conferences can and should, in the interests of Canada, provide dramatic and visual proof of the resolve of this House to sustain the Prime Minister in his initiatives.

Another practical extension of this formal, all-Party support should be a reference to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence to study existing areas of conflict which themselves may give rise to the utilization of nuclear weapons so feared by the Prime Minister, indeed by all thinking Canadians. While we may be preoccupied with nuclear catastrophe, as indeed we must, we should always remember that some four million soldiers are presently engaged in more than 35 armed conflicts. A quarter of the world's nations are currently caught up in such conflicts which have already claimed over five million lives.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, as the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark) warned in reply to the throne speech on April 15, 1980 this decade "seems certain to be a period of virtually continuous regional instability" while, at the same time "relations between the superpowers are deteriorating." The events in Lebanon, South-East Asia and Central America underline the urgency to focus parliamentary attention on ways in which Canada can be a positive influence for conflict resolution. A call for the resumption of the INF disarmament talks in Geneva would be stronger if endorsed by this House. So would be the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) call, which he repeated today, for meetings of the world's five nuclear powers.

Nuclear non-proliferation has preoccupied Canadians for many years. I cannot help but recall the initiative taken by the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Howard Green, who was a member of the government of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, at the first session of the U.N. committee on disarmament in 1962 where he proposed the specific text of the draft declaration intended to ban nuclear weapons from outer space forever. With Parliament's encouragement, Canada could resume with renewed vigour this long-standing and leading role in promoting nuclear non-proliferation among those countries which now possess nuclear technology and those, Mr. Speaker, which have the potential of developing non-peaceful uses of such technology.