

Cuba has the right to arm itself with whatever arms it can get. Cuba has the right to make any alliance that it wishes for its own defence, no matter how much we may dislike, disapprove or even fear that alliance.

Last night mention was made of the fact that the United States was taking action because it has suddenly discovered that the military installations being built in Cuba, presumably supplied by Russia, were for offensive weapons intermediate range ballistic missiles. The words "offensive" and "defensive weapons" are sometimes a little indefinite. Sometimes I feel that we call defensive weapons ours, and offensive weapons theirs. Certainly anyone who has listened to the debates over the past few years, who has read the newspapers or heard United States military policy talked about, has heard about the deterrent and has heard the Americans and others say that the only thing that maintained peace in the world was the United States defences, the striking power of the United States strategic air force, weapons designed to carry the fight to the enemy, these weapons being our first line of defence, our main line of defence. Certainly the words "offensive" and "defensive" may have a very different meaning, depending upon which end of the gun you are looking at.

I can understand some feeling of alarm among the American people at having this type of fearsome weapon only 90 miles from their coast. But, Mr. Chairman, many people all over the world have to live with the thought that their next door neighbour, separated by no water at all perhaps, is equipped with much more fearsome weapons than they have. They live in the shadow forever of a larger and more powerful enemy. Cubans, I may say, have been living in the shadow of the fearsome American arsenal for some time. Many of us live in that shadow, and we can only judge of our safety and how much we want to live there by the actions of that large and powerful neighbour who has the strength to overwhelm us—

(Translation):

Mr. Marcoux: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. In your opinion, is the hon. member who has the floor at present, dealing with the budget or is he not going slightly astray?

The Chairman: I believe it has been decided by unanimous consent that the debate would be limited only insofar as time is concerned. However, this restriction was not to apply to the official spokesmen of each of the parties.

Mr. Marcoux: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Text):

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is this, that when we talked in this house about the action being taken, about the build-up in Cuba and the United States action in taking this matter to the security council and to the United Nations, and said we would help, this I submit is the sort of action that all of us who believe in the United Nations would like to see followed. What I am complaining about and what I am worried about is the action the United States has taken itself in moving in with its own arms and stopping legitimate traffic on the high seas. There is no legal right, other than might, that I can see involved here. There is nothing that I know of that prevents merchant ships sailing to Cuba. I am afraid of an incident happening to a ship refusing to stop and the United States carrying out their threat of firing on that ship. In my view such an action by the United States government would constitute an act of war, would constitute unprovoked aggression.

The United States is our ally. We have not been consulted, although we were informed of the action. I think it is up to us to take a look at our ally, speak to our ally and say, "Any war you get involved in, we must of necessity get involved in too"; but that we cannot, as a nation with a national conscience, permit ourselves to be associated in an action which constitutes unprovoked aggression. I suggest that it is the duty of our government to bring this salient feature to the attention of President Kennedy, to ask him to stay his hand, to not precipitate a fight. I am afraid that the other side will not back down in the face of unprovoked aggression—and where it stops, no one knows.

The Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I question in my own mind whether or not his discourse on this matter, which is in the field of external affairs, is in the best interests of everybody at this particular moment. I am not unaware of the fact that certain agreements were made in this committee as regards standing order 59(2), which has to do with relevancy. I know that very broad scope was given to all hon. members in connection with this particular debate. But what I am concerned about is the fact that we have a very serious crisis in this particularly narrow field, which is of such moment internationally at this time that the question arises in my mind as to whether it is in the best taste to be dealing with a subject that is so highly sensitive at this particular moment.

I am prepared to hear argument on that score, because I realize I was in the chair when very wide scope was given to this debate. But I feel this is the time when I should charge the committee and each and