

will have upon east-west relations. One of the most important and encouraging developments in the past several years has been the willingness of the United States and Soviet Union to begin talks on the issues which divide them, particularly on the problems of arms control and on major political differences such as exist in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Only a few months ago we were all much more optimistic than we are today, before the Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasions of Czechoslovakia, but we are beginning to see hope for the resumption of these talks.

No country has been more active than Canada in pressing the cause of disarmament. I would like to join with others in paying tribute to George Ignatieff, our ambassador in Geneva, who is now heading our talks. I would also pay tribute to General Burns, who retired last week.

We played an important part in the long negotiations leading to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and were among the first countries to ratify it.

It is encouraging that both the United States and the Soviet Union, in their opening statements to the disarmament committee, have shown evidence of serious intention to seek further measures of arms limitation and control. It is obviously in our interests and those of all mankind that Canada should seek in every way to help bring these intensions to fruition. This we will certainly do.

The question that people are naturally asking at this time is whether the prospects for these talks will be jeopardized by the United States decision on A.B.M.'s. On this score, I am not prepared to draw hasty or pessimistic conclusions.

What seems undeniable, however, is that the United States government is serious in its desire to enter into these discussions with the Soviet Union. Just the other day, Mr. Nixon said that it would be the policy of his administration to make the transition from confrontation to negotiation. The President's decision on A.B.M.'s must be seen in the light of his earlier declared intention to seek negotiation with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the President, in the course of his official announcement, made the following statement on the question whether the beginning of construction of an A.B.M. system would complicate an agreement on strategic arms with the Soviet Union. This is what President Nixon said:

I do not believe that evidence of the recent past bears out this contention. Soviet interest in strategic

#### *Firing of A.B.M. Warheads over Canada*

talks was not deterred by the decision of the previous administration to deploy the Sentinel A.B.M. system—in fact, it was formally announced shortly afterwards. I believe that the modifications we have made in the previous program will give the U.S.S.R. even less reason to view our defence effort as an obstacle to talks. Moreover, I wish to emphasize—

I think it is important that hon. members bear this in mind.

—that in any arms limitation talks with the U.S.S.R. the United States will be fully prepared to discuss limitations on defensive as well as offensive weapons systems.

I interpret this to mean the A.B.M. system itself.

As evidence that we may not be faced with an escalation, the Soviet representative at the opening session of the 18 nation disarmament conference at Geneva yesterday made no reference whatever to the President's decision on the A.B.M., but did indicate the Soviet Union's continuing interest on talks of limitation of strategic weapons. I think we can draw some encouragement that this particular announcement by President Nixon may not have the effects some of us fear.

I now turn to some of the considerations for Canada. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has pointed out, Canada cannot divorce its interests from those of the remainder of mankind in this matter. We are not only talking about the defence of Canada and the defence of our cities, but the effect of fallout from an explosion of a missile which by that time would be fired at us. What we are talking about is whether we can maintain peace in the world. Very often when I listen to debate on defence and foreign policies, it appears as though we were fighting 19th century wars. The whole purpose of any defensive system nowadays is that it shall never be used.

If the A.B.M. will contribute to the stability of the nuclear balance, if it will at the same time not prejudice the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic weapons, the benefits are evenly shared. There are, of course, some preoccupations peculiar to Canada. It has been suggested that Canadian permission might be required because some of these missiles might be exploded above Canada.

As I said earlier today, there has been no specific request to Canada from the United States government asking for permission to use our air space. If they do proceed with their A.B.M. system, I have no doubt but that