

Government Orders

mobility, its ability to quickly reach its target, the enemy, its strike power and its invulnerability to enemy attacks. I fail to see how one can object to testing on the grounds that the weapon itself is dangerous. If the weapon were not dangerous, would anyone object to it?

Second, the hon. member claims that since the cold war is now over, there is no further need to develop weapons. But the cold war ended four or five years ago. One could quibble about the dates. The thaw came fairly quickly and if we look at the international situation, it is quite possible that the freeze could be on again, as happens quickly in Ottawa, judging from what I have seen.

The hon. member argues that allowing cruise missile testing will restart the arms race. I think this is somewhat of an exaggeration because we are talking here about allowing something that has gone on for the past ten years. We are not talking about an escalation here, merely about allowing our American allies with whom we have an agreement to conduct a certain number of tests each year. Our duly elected government renewed this agreement last year for a period of ten years. I do not see this as any kind of escalation in the arms race.

Lastly, in referring to statements made recently by U.S. President Clinton, the hon. member argues that the Americans will not be upset if we refuse to allow the testing to proceed.

I find these arguments somewhat debatable. Given the fact that these tests are restricted, that we are not dealing here with a new weapon that has suddenly been added to the world arsenal, does the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce not think that he is being a little alarmist in raising all of these arguments when similar tests have in fact been conducted in recent years?

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, while the cold war is over with the Soviet Union, as I pointed out there are 15 nations called threshold nations and North Korea is one of them. They are on the verge of developing nuclear weapons.

None of these 15 nations are signatories to the non-proliferation treaty. The United States for many years has been trying to encourage China, North Korea and other countries to sign the non-proliferation treaty.

My argument is this: How can we ask these countries to renounce nuclear weapons, renounce the development of new technology with respect to the delivery of nuclear weapons when we continue to fine-tune cruise missiles? By the way the cruise missile they are testing now or have tested in recent years

are not the same as the ones they tested years ago. They continually improve on this cruise missile.

I am saying that while the cold war is over with the Soviet Union, there are still countries that want to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver those nuclear weapons. We do not help the situation by saying on the one hand "don't you do it" but by God we are going to do it ourselves. That does not help. It only contributes to the arms race.

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, at the outset I believe we should acknowledge that this is a debate that has no right or wrong side or answer. Whether this government endorses or refuses to endorse the acceptance of cruise testing over Canadian territory is, whatever the outcome, neither right nor wrong.

We are discussing today on one level our national role in contributing to the aggregate military technological base of our American neighbours. These tests are part of their military research and development. On another level it affords Canada the opportunity to define these tests, having regard to our national values.

With the end of the cold war arguments either for or against cruise missile testing have quite simply lost much force. Hon. members here will recall the history of the modern day cruise, that it evolved from the buzzbombs of second world war Germany and that the Americans and Soviets engaged in a protracted period of technological one-up-manship which resulted in this low level flying missile.

From the development of the cruise has evolved a technology which has military and technological applications which are quite simply American based. To allow this testing to proceed will without doubt and I say this without putting forward a positive or a negative opinion, ensures that the United States continues in its position of pre-eminence in terms of being the number one military power.

From a perspective of fortress North America it could be suggested that the agreement with the United States in 1983 to allow cruise testing was correct. That agreement was renegotiated, as we heard, in 1993 for another 10-year period, putting us through to the year 2003.

The reason for choosing this Canadian corridor as a test site was quite simple. The terrain and weather conditions in the 2,200 kilometre long corridor is similar to that of the Soviet Union, as the speaker before me noted.

In 1983 NORAD was vitally concerned about the security of North America having regard to the then perceived Soviet arsenal. I would like to pose this open-ended question to members present here today: Are we as North Americans threatened by the former Soviet military?