

Nuclear Armaments

● (1720)

I would not want Members of the House, however, to believe that Canada is dragging its heels in promoting peace. Far from it. While we have not considered such zones to be a satisfactory alternative to the ratification of the non-proliferation treaty, this Government does believe that, in the absence of universal adherence to the non-proliferation treaty, the creation of such zones can make a contribution to the objective of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In order to be effective, such zones must: first, apply to a well defined geographic area; second, have support from the principal military powers of the region; third, not give military advantage to any state or group of states; fourth, contain adequate treaty assurances and means to verify that all countries abide by the commitments involved; fifth, not permit the countries of the area to have an independent nuclear explosive capability; and finally, enhance regional security and international stability.

Some Hon. Members may believe such criteria to be excessively rigorous, but we believe it is only through strict application of such criteria that nuclear weapons free zones will be effective. Canada has voted in favour of United Nations resolutions calling for such zones in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. We have also backed measures which would consolidate the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in Latin America, in accordance with the Treaty of Tlateloko. Canada also supports the South Pacific nuclear free zone which came into effect under the Treaty of Rarotonga in December, 1986.

There are some areas of the world, however, where efforts to create nuclear weapons free zones have not succeeded. It would be useful to look at some of these in order to clarify Canada's position.

The idea of a Nordic nuclear weapons free zone has been under discussion for almost 30 years. The primary impediment to its establishment is that such a zone is not considered viable without the inclusion of the Baltic region and parts of the western U.S.S.R. in the geographically designated areas. The U.S.S.R. has provided no indication that it would accept the inclusion of its territory owing to the military significance of the Kola Peninsula, which is the location of the densest concentration of nuclear weapons in the world.

The creation of a Balkan nuclear free zone appears even more remote despite expressions of interest of all the Balkan States on various occasions. The major obstacle is that the removal of American nuclear weapons from the area would create a destabilizing regional imbalance since nuclear weapons on neighbouring Soviet territory would remain untouched. The various inter-regional conflicts and multilateral differences, particularly the fact that the region includes two NATO and two Warsaw Pact members and other non-aligned nations, further complicate this issue.

In Southeast Asia, an increased Soviet naval presence and an expansionist Vietnam have prompted interest among the six Asian countries—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand—in the establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in their region. An important element of this concept would be the declaration of Southeast Asia as a nuclear weapons free zone. However, differences of view among the ASEAN states and practical problems of implementation have relegated the realization of the measure to the distant future.

I have tried to show, then, that there are many factors which affect a region's ability to declare a nuclear weapons free zone. It is obviously even more difficult to make such a declaration effective and meaningful. In each case, specific and concrete strategic realities must be taken into account. It would be foolhardy and dangerous for Canada to pass such a resolution. Declaring Canada a nuclear weapons free zone would involve a serious abdication of our alliance responsibilities and might even require withdrawal from NATO. Such a proposal would clearly not have the support of our allies and would in all likelihood give military advantage to the Soviets, thus reducing regional security and international stability.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate to the House that Canada does support the declaration of nuclear weapons free zones if regional conditions permit. Such a declaration is not appropriate for Canada. A more productive approach is to encourage serious arms control and disarmament measures within established negotiating agencies such as the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Geneva. It is only through serious negotiations involving the nuclear weapon states that meaningful advances in arms control can take place.

Fortunately, the superpowers are, of late, negotiating seriously to find a mutually satisfactory way to reduce their nuclear arms. Countries such as Canada can and are doing much to encourage the superpowers to continue their efforts. In my opinion, the present situation is more hopeful than it has been in the last two decades. Progress is being made toward balance and verifiable reduction of nuclear weapons.

I am more optimistic today about nuclear disarmament than I have been since the U.S.S.R. started the new generation of nuclear weapons with its introduction of the SS-20, which destabilized the relative balance that existed in 1977.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, in addressing this both provocative and important resolution, I am reminded of this summer when I had the opportunity to read a very long and fascinating book entitled *The Making of the Atom Bomb*. It was a study of how scientists from five or six different countries in the 1920s and 1930s arrived at the awesome discovery that we could unleash the force of the atom.

In light of the prevailing mood in Europe and the emergence of Nazi Germany at that time, many of those scientists decided that the force of atomic energy should be examined