

*North-South Relations*

us, the inward-looking defensive attitudes that characterized Canadian foreign policy in that period are also behind us.

[Translation]

How unfortunate it would be if we do not have new ideas or new policies to meet the challenges facing us in matters of international policy, and if we always have the consensus of the western countries before acting to solve international problems. In some cases, we should try to act as a responsible member of the western alliance, that is, as a member who can be depended upon. In other cases, we must be willing to act on our own initiative and, as the task force indicated, in keeping with our well-established tradition of contribution and leadership in world affairs.

[English]

Let me turn first, Mr. Speaker, to some basic considerations about our role in NATO, although this will be dealt with in more detail by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon). It is clearly true, Sir, that at the heart of our foreign policy is the commitment to the collective defence of the western industrialized democracies. During the past decade, after a rather shaky start Canada has reconfirmed its commitment to NATO and bilateral defence arrangements with the United States. After considerable political and diplomatic effort, we have also found our place in the highest council of the West, the economic summit of the leading international states. These are vitally important undertakings. I accept without reservation that we must play an appropriate part in collective defence, and that we cannot influence our friends if they believe that we are failing to do our fair share.

The government of which I was a part made it clear to our NATO partners that Canada could be counted on to re-equip and strengthen Canadian forces in Europe and to make our contribution to joint endeavours such as the airborne early warning system. While I accept the importance of these obligations, I wonder now to what use we are putting our membership in the alliance. Surely it is not enough to lie low and always wait for consensus of the other nations to emerge. Yet that seems to be the policy of the present government. Where do we stand, for example, on questions of arms negotiations with the Soviet Union? The Prime Minister dealt with this in part but not in specific detail.

I would like to know what suggestions Canada has to offer which might further the success of that enterprise. What is our response to the Soviet build-up of forces in central Europe; and, I ask how do we intend to play our part in the western commitment announced at the recent NATO meeting to require restraint and reciprocity on the part of the Soviet Union?

Imposing some restraint on the Soviet Union has never been more necessary than at present in regard to Poland. The ominous Soviet moves in the last week have once again underlined the gravity of the situation. Nothing is more threatening to the process and future of détente. It is therefore incumbent upon us to persuade the Soviet Union, in every way open to us, to refrain from an attack upon Poland.

• (1600)

Poland is a signatory to the Helsinki declaration on which we have placed so much emphasis in our foreign policy toward eastern European countries. It will not be enough to condemn mildly a Soviet invasion after it occurs, as happened in the case of Afghanistan. The NATO allies must individually and collectively use every instrument and every channel of diplomacy to induce restraint on the part of the Soviet Union. Our wish is that the Poles be allowed the possibility of determining their own political future.

Unhappily, the post-war history of Europe has seen the acceptance of a Soviet sphere of influence in eastern Europe. But this cannot mean that we are indifferent to the fate of Poland; nor is it the case that we are without influence on the Soviet Union.

What we require is a collective allied determination to exert that influence to the utmost, so that we help preserve the limited freedom of action which the Poles have struggled so hard to achieve. We should not believe we can achieve that only through quiet diplomacy. It requires the expression of open public concern, and that has been in short supply from this government.

While we do our part to help the people of central Europe, we should also remember that we have an overriding interest in the pursuit of arms control and disarmament. What has happened to the government's initiative on disarmament announced in the Speech from the Throne? Yes, we have an ambassador for disarmament, but what opportunities has he been given to advance new policies or to publicize the issues?

Over the years I have been impressed by the number of committed, serious analysts of foreign policy who have come to the belief that dramatic steps must be taken to curb the growth of the arms race. Most recently, in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, George Kennan, the most distinguished of American analysts, pleaded for a new approach to the problem of controlling nuclear weapons. He asked us to put aside the fine points and technical arguments which invariably lead to the demand for more weapons. He suggested that the United States should approach the Soviet Union and, in all sanity, seek out the common interest in reducing the destructive power of nuclear arsenals.

Where once, in the 1950s, several hundred nuclear weapons were thought to constitute a massive deterrent, it is now the case that thousands of warheads are deployed by both superpowers. Thousands more are being built, and still both superpowers are apparently insecure and uncertain about their own capabilities and, indeed, the capabilities and intentions of the other side.

It is clear that some within the Reagan administration in Washington would like to see arms control policies delayed, but that is no reason for us to abandon the task as well. Indeed, it places a greater obligation upon us to seek out new policies and to keep interest alive in what is ultimately the most fundamental task ahead of us.