

*Supply*

hence unverifiable. That was not some dove saying that; it was a highly respected strategic analyst who said it. That can be found in the minutes of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence in March of 1982.

One hundred and eleven nations of the world voted for the Mexico-Sweden freeze proposal at the United Nations because of their great concern that, if the development of new generation nuclear weapons is not frozen now, we will never be able to get adequate, verifiable arms reductions in place.

The Official Opposition seem to miss this point in their amendment. I suppose the one good thing one could argue about it is that they at least say they want to have the two superpowers put a nuclear freeze on their agenda. Since the Soviet Union has already voted for a nuclear freeze, they are basically saying that they want the United States to put a nuclear freeze on their agenda. I suppose that is a step forward, but it certainly is not the kind of step which we are asking for in our motion, which is for the House now to support a nuclear freeze in order to bring about the kind of massive, verifiable reductions we all want.

One of the favorite arguments of Hon. Members in the Government and the Liberal Party is that we would be freezing imbalances in Europe. The fact is that there is a rough global balance. Some would argue that the American side is still ahead globally. When the American military people are asked whether they would exchange their nuclear hardware for that of the Soviets, they always say no. There may be imbalances in certain weapons in parts of certain theatres. However, when you are talking about nuclear weapons nowadays, it frankly does not much matter whether you have a little imbalance in one theatre as compared to another. This nit-picking has caused Members to lose sight of the fact that what we now have can destroy the planet 50 times over. There is no longer any distinction to be made on a rational basis between an intermediate range and an intercontinental range nuclear missile. These distinctions have been meaningless for several years now.

For a long time we have been calling for a merging of the talks on theatre and intercontinental or strategic weapons because the differences between them have become so artificial. Nowadays everything is either short-range, medium-range or long-range. If the Department was doing any real thinking about the problem, that would have been a meaningful thing for the Secretary of State for External Affairs to have called for. The differences between the two sides have become meaningless. The difference between a destabilizing and a less destabilizing nuclear weapon has also become meaningless. People get into this kind of military talk and feel they are being terribly informed and are throwing light on the question somehow. Frankly, it is a red herring. It is just a way of avoiding the real question which, as I say, is fundamentally the one presented in this United Nations motion in which we are asking the House to support a nuclear freeze.

Many years ago the former Prime Minister asked for a strategy of suffocation. I remember asking him in the House if a strategy of suffocation was a mutual freeze. He replied that

the two are the same thing. His emphasis, of course, was on suffocating in the laboratory. The freeze would suffocate in the laboratory, on the production line, and in deployment. The first step is suffocation in the laboratory; no one has any question about that. He then pressed that strategy of suffocation. He admitted that the freeze was, in his words, the same. We found that he was not able to bring himself to support a nuclear freeze resolution or have the Government support it at the United Nations last year. I presume that it is still the position of the Liberal Party that it cannot support the strategy of suffocation, that is a freeze, after having advocated it. Of course, the present Government is simply following the advice that the Department gave the former Government.

● (1230)

We were told that the new Government would be open and would consult widely with the Canadian public. While the Minister for External Relations (Mrs. Vézina) did not reiterate this, one reason given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs for not supporting the freeze was that the Government's policy was still unfolding. It is to have a policy review next year that would be carried out by a special committee of the House or by the standing committee. This special review of policy will include hearings with Canadians in order to give them "a means of allowing Canadians a say in foreign policy formation". That was one reason given for not moving now on the freeze.

However, Canadians have wanted a say in foreign policy formation for some years now, particularly in the area of a nuclear freeze and no Cruise missile testing. We are well aware that they have been expressing their views on these matters for the last three years. I suggest it is rather phony for the Government to say that it must listen to Canadians on this particular matter. Why does it not read what Canadians have already said in this respect for the last two or three years?

I suspect that the Government's emphasis on the consultative process is merely an attempt to kid us into believing that it will take seriously what Canadians have to say. It is only continuing the kinds of policies which the previous Government had in the field of arms freeze and Cruise missile testing. I believe it is simply a delaying tactic or part of its new "civility" when the Government tells Canadians that what they say will matter. It has not mattered to the Government yet. The views of Canadians about the nuclear freeze or Cruise missile testing did not matter to the Government when it was in opposition.

I am becoming disturbed by the Government's promises to be open, democratic and consultative when it does the exact opposite with respect to matters on which Canadians have already stated their position. If this is going to be the case in all aspects of our external relations, why does the Government bother having this rather phony set of hearings? If it will not pay any more attention to what Canadians have said on the matter of Cruise missile testing and a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze, why does it bother to have these hearings?