

Development Assistance

How can the Hon. Member suggest that funds should be diverted from the defence budget? I would assume that he has consulted with his colleague, the Hon. Member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn), or indeed his own Leader. When the Hon. Member for Brant announced his Party's position on defence matters last summer, no cuts were proposed. In fact, evidence shows that defence spending would increase under an NDP Government. I think this reinforces the NDP's position of consistently being inconsistent.

It was admitted at that time that indeed the previous Liberal Government had underfunded the defence effort and had left defence policy in shambles.

I should like to say a few words on two other key elements of Canadian security policy—disarmament and development assistance. The position of the Government regarding the relationship between disarmament and development is well established. It was made clear by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) at the UN Conference on this subject which was held in New York last month. Both remain major commitments of the Government. We continue to view both as fundamental policy objectives but as distinct processes related only through security. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs noted in his statement to the General Assembly, "Progress toward development and progress toward disarmament can both contribute to that security, but their relationship is not simple".

The approach to both must be global in scope and involve all countries. Both must be pursued together, recognizing that Governments are unlikely to disarm at the expense of what they consider their security in order to divert funds to development. We must accept that the level of a nation's security is the main criterion against which efforts for disarmament must be measured. Security is the touchstone. The reality is that each nation will judge its own security in its own terms.

In this sense security involves not only a military dimension but a state's economic and social well-being. A nation's security is the main criterion against which efforts for disarmament must be measured, not the level of economic gain. Development in its broadest sense can contribute to security by helping to create a stable international system. This will in turn diminish the importance of military strength as an element in a nation's security. Collaboration at all levels will be the mainstay of this process. It will remain necessary to continue to support and to further, as we are dedicated to do, existing global and regional institutions and agreements which promote disarmament and development.

In respect of the particular proposal made by the Hon. Member, the Government continues to believe that the idea of any prescribed transfers of funds saved through disarmament is unrealistic. Such savings when and where they occur can be used to support broad development objectives in numerous ways, such as debt reduction, stimulation of trade, investment and economic growth. These decisions are primarily for sovereign Governments to make in accordance with their own

assessments of circumstances and events. Rather than specify particulars, we believe the accent should remain on a practical approach to these issues. It is a question of political will and of giving support to existing development and disarmament institutions and negotiations.

A further difficulty with the motion is more fundamental. Disarmament and development each constitute basic and long-standing government commitments whose importance has been consistently reaffirmed in annual expenditure reviews by Cabinet. The notion, therefore, that Canadian defence expenditures should be reduced for the purpose of transferring funds for development in the Third World ignores the fact that the level of such expenditures is decided in accordance with over-all security considerations.

Furthermore, Canadian development assistance is provided in accordance with well-established socio-economic criteria which, in the Government's view, must remain the principal guide. Even if any potential recipient country were to reduce military spending by 1 per cent, we would not wish to provide development assistance to a country on this basis. The Government would continue to insist that socio-economic determinants for the allocation of development assistance be given priority, if only to ensure that official development assistance is allocated in the most effective way.

In advocating this approach we do so from a position of strength and achievement. We have since 1949 provided \$24 billion in official development assistance. Unlike the situation in some other parts of the world, none of this has been used for military assistance. The global ratio of military spending to official development assistance stands at about twenty to one. In Canada, the ratio is four to one, among the lowest in the world.

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In disarmament, we continue to participate actively in all multilateral arms control and disarmament forums where our contribution is well established and of long standing. We make our views known at the bilateral level.

We are set on a course of action dedicated to the enhancement of our security and to international security in its most basic sense. This is consistent with both our policy on disarmament and our commitment to development. The motion put by the Hon. Member does not support this purpose.

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. I did not intend to rise, but one might say that I have been provoked by the interventions of my colleagues from the Liberal and Conservative Parties.

I understood this to be Private Members' Hour. I thought we were here as individual Members of Parliament to debate a matter of substance rather than engage in a partisan harangue about the policies of particular Parties. I am a little disappointed in that regard. I think it is important for us as individual