

*National Defence Act Amendment*

meant to acquire for Canada the nuclear warheads required for the weapons systems that had been purchased for our armed forces to enable them to carry out the commitments that had been undertaken on behalf of our country. The second was to review the equipment programs then outstanding. The third was to determine a long range defence policy for Canada.

• (4:30 p.m.)

In so far as the first of these is concerned, hon. members will recall that a bilateral treaty was signed with the United States of America under which it would be possible to stockpile nuclear warheads for those weapons systems which had been supplied to our troops and for which they were being trained. Technical agreements were signed between the forces of our two countries. A certain amount of construction was undertaken, and ultimately all of these weapons systems became fully operational.

The review of the existing equipment program involved a study of the requirements from a military standpoint, budgetary considerations and, third and probably most important of all their possible effect on future defence policy. In some cases programs were cancelled because they did not fit into our plans for the future, because there were weaknesses technically and, in some cases, the effectiveness did not justify the expenditure being made. In other cases we decided to continue the programs that had been undertaken and which were current at the time of the change in government.

All the while that these two matters were being attended to, preparations were in hand for the writing of a long range defence plan for Canada. Study groups were set up which included representatives of the navy, army, air force, the deputy minister's staff and the Defence Research Board. These studies covered a wide range of activities such as the military history of this country, the changes that had taken place in weapons technology over a period of ten years, an appraisal of the likely changes in technology in the coming ten years from that time, a look at the political situation in the world and a guess as to what might develop amongst the nations of the world in the decades to come. Finally, there was an appreciation of the strategic situation as it then existed in the world.

It is difficult to make political forecasts because no one has a crystal ball which is infallible. At the same time one has to make

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assumptions in order to base plans on them. These assumptions were ultimately stated in the white paper as it was published in 1964.

Cardinal to the plan as set out in the white paper was the strategic situation as it existed at that time. On this question there was no difference of opinion whatsoever. The unanimous decision by the chiefs of staff and all the staff members who considered it was that in the world today the least likely kind of war is an all out thermonuclear war. At the other end of the spectrum, the most likely kind of war is a continuation of small wars, riots, insurrections, the overthrow of civil government, namely, the kind of conflict that has been going on almost continuously throughout history and certainly continuously during the 20 years since world war II.

Each side in the cold war, the United States and the U.S.S.R., has sufficient thermonuclear striking power that even after one side had commenced a sneak attack the other would be able to retaliate, from hardened and dispersed bases, with sufficient power to wipe out the aggressor's industrialized areas. Therefore this kind of attack would be irrational. There is no conceivable political goal which would justify a conflagration on that scale, a conflagration which would result in casualties ranging from 150 million to 300 million people in the first 24 hours, depending on the circumstances prevailing at the time.

From a rational standpoint, therefore, this kind of conflagration is the least likely during the ten year period. That is not to say it could not happen as a result of madness or miscalculation, but it is not likely to happen and certainly not from a rational standpoint. Steps have been taken to reduce the chance of miscalculation. A hot wire has been established between Washington and Moscow in order to check out at the highest decision making level the intentions of one toward the other in the event an incident happens over which there is some uncertainty as to what the intention of the other party really is.

The only other caveat which I think should be registered in respect of this strategic appraisal is that it is only true as long as the strategic balance remains, as long as the thermonuclear stalemate continues. This implies, of course, that we retain on the western side an effective deterrent which would make it inadvisable for the Soviet union ever to undertake an adventure of this sort.

The other end of the scale, however, is the almost certainty that there may be times