

agreement or a commitment on behalf of each of us as individual citizens.

There is a truism therefore that comes into play in a situation like that. The truism is that your word is your bond. We are only as good as our word individually, and collectively as a nation.

Our government at the time committed us to an agreement and we are therefore honour bound to live up to it today. The bottom line is that we should allow these tests to proceed for the following reasons.

We made an agreement with the United States in good faith and we should stick to it. Cruise missiles may be used to deliver conventional ordinances. Many countries now have the ability to manufacture and use cruise missiles and therefore it is in our best interests to learn how to track and intercept them.

There is a defensive nature to the testing of cruise missiles which needs to be recognized. Unless cruise missiles are flown in a test mode how would our pilots and how would our radar interceptors ever get the ability or the knowledge to learn how to intercept them?

The test corridor is in a sparsely settled area thereby posing little or no inconvenience or damage to Canadians or to wildlife. I do recognize the points made by the hon. member who addressed this House prior to me that it is an inhabited territory. There are people who do live there and we should not go through this without at least getting their permission or their leave to do it just as a matter of courtesy.

An extremely important consideration is that we have an obligation to co-operate with our NORAD partner under whose protective umbrella the western world has lived for 40 years. Not to mention the fact as others have made the point before me that we are going into bilateral negotiations with the Americans from time to time. How would you feel if you had been giving comfort to and looking after your neighbour for 40 years and when you wanted to borrow his lawnmower he said no.

There is a quid pro quo here. We have to work together.

• (2055)

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to the member from Edmonton Southwest in his statement that we are honour bound to our agreement.

It is my contention that we are honour bound to our children and our future children. A group of Alberta physicians once stated that prevention is the only treatment for war.

I would urge the government to consider cancelling the cruise missile testing that is taking world leadership in working toward the prevention of war. I would like my hon. colleague on the other side to consider this as well.

Government Orders

Members of this House had an incredible opportunity yesterday to debate an issue of great global significance. However the substance of the debate dealt with the treatment of war.

As we found out yesterday and indeed as humankind has struggled repeatedly over the millennia of world history, treating victims stricken with the disease of war is tremendously difficult, if not impossible.

The government is undertaking a review of current defence policy. Canada's role as a peacekeeper—peacemaker needs redefinition in the light of changing world conditions.

I am very thankful to the government for encouraging open debate on the topics of peacekeeping in Bosnia and the cruise missile testing.

This debate is especially important to new members like myself and my colleague as it sends out a strong and very real message to not only the member's constituents in Edmonton Southwest but to my constituents in York—Simcoe.

To the people of Canada, the Prime Minister is serious and committed to including input from all members of the House whether on the government side or not, whether in cabinet or not.

The debates of the last two days are crucial because it is only through a comprehensive examination of the totality of Canada's defence policy that we can put the decision whether or not to continue the testing of cruise missiles in proper perspective and make a decision that is right for the times.

I would say to the hon. member for Calgary Southwest that yes, we are bound to certain kinds of agreements. Those are agreements written on paper. Those are agreements that are part of legislated agreements between governments.

I would suggest to the hon. member and I would like him to consider that we are honour bound to our children and our future children as well.

Mr. McClelland: Madam Speaker, I will be very succinct.

If the agreement that we were honour bound to live up to were an agreement of disarmament, I am sure the hon. member would have no problem in admonishing this House to live up to that agreement. It is the question that you lie to the devil that you do not like.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Madam Speaker, I do not have much time, but I will try to be quick. The hon. member talked about a defensive strategy and I found his point interesting. I would have liked to learn a bit more about that. There has been a gradual change in the deterrent strategy with which I have agreed for years. The nuclear era started with the bombing of Hiroshima. Then we witnessed a gradual build-up of destructive power to a point where total destruction of a city the size of New York was possible. Nowadays, the deterrent strategy is more and