

*Government Orders*

However, today's debate is not on that at all. We saw just two years ago in the gulf war that the U.S. technology, the cruise missile technology, can also be used in delivering strategic surgical, very precise blows to the arsenals of the opposing forces, in that particular case the Iraqis. I dare say that the technology that was developed yes, initially to deliver tactical nuclear weapons was used with conventional weapons in a way that minimized the loss of life and probably decreased the length of that war.

The reality is that as Canadians, as parliamentarians, we are now facing a crisis in Canada. We are trying to develop, and we are inviting input from all members from all sides, a national defence policy, not just for this year or next, but for the future.

The reality is that for a long period of time we have relied on our membership in international organizations like NORAD and NATO to provide us with collective security as a nation. I would go so far as to say that as a nation we probably spend very, very little on a per capita basis for our defence in comparison to other countries that are in the NATO alliance or NORAD.

As part of a team, there is give and take. Yesterday we heard a lot about the give. Canada has given to the world a thing called peacekeeping in the great Pearson tradition. We debated that yesterday. We are the country with a small population which has excelled around the world and has gained support and credibility from our neighbours through the United Nations for our military efforts, not at making war or being an aggressor state, but as peacekeepers. That is the contribution we have made through the international community and through our NATO and NORAD agreements to peace and security. Let us be fair. The Americans, the giant that lives next door provides us, because it is in their strategic interest, with most of our national defence. We have to give something in return for that. What they have asked for in the past, and which has caused great concern among Canadians, was that we allow them to test the cruise missile on Canadian soil.

• (1720)

What we are being asked to debate is whether it is the opinion of members of this House that the 10-year agreement which was renewed last year by the previous government should be upheld. Indeed we should try to stimulate debate in this place about what type of defence policy we do want.

It is fairly clear. It was the Leader of the Opposition who quoted physicist Kosta Tsipis. The quote he used is important. It deals with the available technology that is used in the cruise missile itself. Mr. Tsipis indicated that any country that can manufacture simple aircraft can construct a cruise missile that can carry a ton of cargo at least 300 miles and land no more than 30 feet from its target.

It is clear that we are dealing with the second generation of testing of cruise technology by the United States. We know that other countries have the technology to develop cruise type missiles. We know that some of those countries which have the technology to have cruise type missiles are not friendly or stable countries.

We know with the collapse of the Soviet Union that much of the arsenal which was at least protected by the former communist government through force is now or perhaps will be up for sale. It would be foolhardy in seeking to maintain some type of international peace for the Canadian government not to at least in the interim until the defence policy is fully fleshed out through a review to uphold the commitment to allow the American government to come in and further test the cruise missile.

What are they testing it for? Are they testing it because they want to put a nuclear warhead on it? No. That is not why they are doing it. From all I read this round of testing is basically to ensure that the United States will be able to develop some methods to better detect cruise missiles and similar technology from other countries.

Is that a valid observation? I think it is and it is something that we have to agree to. If we look at where our Canadian troops are currently serving, we do not know if in a year, six months, or two years time that we are not going to see an aggressor force or some radical group in a civil war somewhere where our troops are using cruise technology against us.

In this case the best defence is an offence, to look and see what it is we can do to aid the Americans in developing the second tier of technology in order to be able to detect low-level cruise type missiles that are coming from other countries.

It is also important to look at what is going on today as a prelude to a much larger and much more necessary debate that will take place in this House.

During the course of the campaign, the military and military expenditures became a major issue. One question kept being asked. I represent an area where we have all kinds of people that work in the Canadian military, probably over 10,000 or maybe 15,000. We have the Canadian navy. We have CFB Shearwater. There are lots of individuals who are in the Canadian military.

With the changing geopolitical situation, the Canadian government must seize the initiative and ensure that we have a modern defence policy. What we said during the campaign is that as a government we would initiate and conclude through broad consultation, not just the parliamentarians but all Canadians, what it is we should be doing through the United Nations in the interests of global peace and security and also in the interests of protecting our national sovereignty.

Until that review is completed I would submit to the House that it is in the interests of international peace and security and it is in the interest of Canada's standing in the world community through its adherence to international agreements that the