

chairman of the Eminent Persons Group, said on Canadian television last night that the situation will not wait.

Over the weekend will the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister, and their colleagues, review and reassess this situation so that Canada starts showing the way in what is a very, very serious situation?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is not alone in appreciating the fact that it is a serious situation. The Government has recognized that fact and acted as much as a year ago. If he assumes that the Prime Minister is doing nothing now with respect to communicating with other nations, that assumption is wrong. The Prime Minister is very pro active in his attempts to obtain the support of other Commonwealth nations. He has certainly been displaying a heck of a lot more leadership in this area than did any predecessor Government in the country.

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● (1120)

NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS

SALT II—UNITED STATES POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday White House spokesmen and the President himself confirmed that the United States will no longer abide by the limitations of the SALT II Treaty. In the discussions being held today with the Vice-President of the United States has Canada made known its very deep sense of disagreement with this policy? Can the Minister tell us what actions the Government will be taking to give voice and expression to that strong disappointment and disagreement?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. gentleman was here on the day that the Secretary of State for External Affairs made the position of the Canadian Government quite clear. For those who might believe there is any confusion arising out of the statement made by President Reagan yesterday and those which followed, whichever version you might wish to adopt, Canada's position has not altered one iota. It remains as stated by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

CRUISE MISSILE TESTING

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister will know that the agreement which was signed between Canada and the United States on testing their Cruise missile was predicated upon an active pursuit of arms control. Does the Minister now agree with the recommendations put forward by the Canadian Centre for Arms Control

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and Disarmament that Canada should continue this arrangement only if the United States adheres to limitations of the SALT II and that, if it does not adhere to those limits, Canada should refuse to test the Cruise missile any further? Does the Minister agree with that position and will he express that to the United States Vice-President?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman would agree with me that the ultimate objective here is achieving an enhanced arms limitation agreement. That achievement cannot be unilateral. It must be by both the superpowers involved.

The Geneva talks are on-going. New proposals have been made, and no doubt will be made. I think the actions of the Government of Canada should support that far more desirable objective of an enhanced arms control agreement. I am sure the hon. gentleman would agree that that should be our ultimate objective.

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APARTHEID

SOUTH AFRICA—COMMONWEALTH ACCORD—CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister on the alarming and worsening situation in South Africa. The Minister has suggested in the House that the Government is attempting to get a united Commonwealth position on this situation. Will he confirm that, according to paragraph seven of the Accord that was reached in Nassau, since the eminent persons made a report which was not accepted by South Africa, the Government is now free to take independent action? Paragraph seven specifically alludes to that. It lists eight possible courses of action open to Commonwealth Governments to act on their own. Could the Minister tell us why the Government of Canada chose the weakest possible options in that list to act upon?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the hon. gentleman. His own critic stated yesterday that the Government had taken actions in this connection which were far ahead of any taken by any previous administration.

Mr. Broadbent: That's not the issue.

Mr. Nielsen: She appeared to me to be very supportive of what the Government was doing. She did suggest that further steps could be taken. The Secretary of State for External Affairs did not say that those steps would not be taken. Indeed, he said there was a wide range of options which remain available and that we would be proceeding to consult with other Commonwealth countries to see to it that the broadest