

*Government Policy on Air Defence*

Believing that the spread of nuclear weapons at the independent disposal of individual nations should be limited, we consider that it is expedient that ownership and custody of the nuclear warheads should remain with the United States. The requirements of Canadian and United States legislation on atomic energy will continue to apply, and there will be no change in Canada's responsibility to regulate all flights of aircraft over Canadian territory.

Our two governments have assumed joint responsibility for the air defence of Canada and the continental United States, including Alaska, and have implemented their responsibilities through the establishment of the North American air defence command. The Canadian government exercises with the United States government joint responsibility for the joint operations of the command, including the use of defensive nuclear weapons if necessary. In the event that these defensive weapons are made available for use by NORAD, they could be used only in accordance with procedures governing NORAD's operations as approved in advance by both governments. Such weapons, therefore, would be used from Canadian territory or in Canadian air space only under conditions previously agreed to by the Canadian government. With respect to decisions as to procedures concerning custody and control of nuclear warheads for use by Canadian forces operating under the supreme allied commander in Europe and the supreme allied commander in the North Atlantic ocean, those decisions will be subject to negotiation with the appropriate NATO partners concerned and with those commanders.

I feel sure, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members will recognize the gravity of the decisions we are called upon to make in these defence matters, by reason of the almost unbelievable nature of the world in which we live. I should like to emphasize the government's desire to ensure the security of Canada by all efficient and reasonable means at our disposal and in concert with our strong and trustworthy allies.

May I say, sir, that I thank the house for giving me this opportunity of making this lengthy statement. In so far as matters such as defence are concerned, I believe that the decisions and discussions will in the future, as in the past, remain above partisan political considerations. It is in that spirit that I place this matter before the house. This is a decision that could not be arrived at without much soul-searching and one which we believe, in the light of the expectations of the future, will be considered right.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

**Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition):** I feel that the Prime Minister was right, Mr. Speaker, when he said that all hon. members would recognize the gravity of the decisions that we, in parliament, are called upon to make in these defence matters by reason of the almost unbelievable nature of the world in which we live. There is no doubt about that.

It would not be appropriate, I think, for me to comment at any length on the substance of the very important statement which the Prime Minister has made, a statement of far-reaching importance in regard to defence and a statement of importance also in regard to our relations with our allies, particularly on this occasion our relations in defence matters with the United States of America. It is a statement of importance also in regard to the industrial and economic development of our own country.

I do not intend at this time, Mr. Speaker, to attempt to make any observations or any comments on the decision the government has made in regard to the CF-105 or on the fact that this decision is being made in February, 1959 rather than earlier. There is no doubt, and the Prime Minister's statement has pointed it up, that we in this country have to co-ordinate our defence policy with our neighbour on this continent and also with our allies in the Atlantic community, and that in this collective defence, which is the only kind of defence which makes any sense in the world about which the Prime Minister has spoken, Canada has to play a full and effective part.

Our obligations in that regard—and I am sure the Prime Minister will agree with me—are not lessened in any way by the decision the government has made with regard to this particular aspect of defence policy. The Prime Minister has said that the government is engaged in further studies of various alternatives for the improvement of our defences. This statement points up at least in my mind, Mr. Speaker, the desirability—indeed, as I see it, the necessity—of a complete and comprehensive study through a committee or a subcommittee appointed for the purpose not merely of government policies that have been announced but of the whole concept of Canadian defence policy in the world in which we live. Where are we going from now in this vital matter?

The Prime Minister has mentioned one alternative to the kind of defence equipment we have been using in the past—and which in the case of the CF-105 is now to be cancelled—in the Bomarc missile. Surely if we are going to make this change from an interceptor developed and built in Canada to a missile developed and built in the United