

waters. Surely that is not our responsibility or task. We are not a superpower and should not have any delusions about that.

The surface fleet must be complemented by long-range patrol aircraft. The Conservatives piled new northern flights on the existing Auroras after the *Polar Sea* incident. New patrol aircraft should be ordered so that the Armed Forces can do this job properly. I commend the Government for recognizing its error. However, Canada should not purchase nuclear submarines because it would cost \$10 billion. The Minister is dreaming in Technicolor if he thinks he can buy nuclear submarines for the cost of frigates. In fact, this purchase has cancelled the third batch of frigates. The second batch is subject to a Cabinet review in September. Fewer helicopters will be purchased and, of course, there will be no conventional submarines. Why? We have no evidence of Soviet submarines in the Canadian Arctic. American submarines might be present in the Arctic but Canada surely would not sink such an intruder. The political and environmental consequences would be disastrous.

● (1300)

What is the Minister proposing? He is proposing we spend up to \$10 billion to protect our sovereignty against our closest ally. That is how it appears from this side of the House.

There are better ways to protect our sovereignty. We should put fixed sensors off our three coasts. They can monitor submarines without risking human life and the delicate Arctic environment. Icebreakers can provide a much more visible physical presence than nuclear submarines. We should build up our conventional submarine fleet. A combination of fixed sensors, air patrols, surface ships and conventional submarines can then track intruders as they pass through choke points and head for open waters. This balanced fleet—and I stress that it is a balanced fleet—would also greatly enhance the security of the waters off our east and west coasts.

The Americans have legitimate interest in knowing if we discover any Soviet activity in Canadian waters or air space. We should keep them informed so that the United States will not collect this information without regard for Canadian sovereignty, but we should not be drawn into an undersea NORAD.

No where is the commitment capability gap more evident than in mobile command. It is spread half way around the world by our commitment to reinforce Europe and our peace-keeping in Cyprus and the Middle East. But Canada cannot live up to this commitment. Just last week two experts told Canadians that our troops would not last two weeks in a war and that our presence in Germany is purely symbolic. It costs \$1 billion a year to keep one brigade and some CF-18s in Germany for purely symbolic reasons. This is not to denigrate the men and women who are there in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is simply, however, political symbolism which does not make any military sense.

Statements by Ministers

The Government could not bring itself to adjust our commitments to meet our capabilities. Instead, it cut a commitment, which existed only on paper, to send a brigade to Norway. It has now ordered a small increase to our symbolic commitment to Germany. Canada is now making one hollow promise instead of two.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, we could all be a little more honest. Canada should bring its commitments in line with its capabilities. We are not a major military power. We are a North American country with world-wide commitments in peace-keeping, disaster relief and rapid reinforcement to deter aggression. The predecessor of the New Democratic Party, the CCF, strongly supported the formation of NATO during those dark days in the late 1940s when the major potential fear was in the central flank. My present party, the New Democratic Party, also supported NATO strongly until the end of the 1960s. But in the 1940s and 1950s, Europe was in shambles. Its economies destroyed by war. It had virtually no capability to defend itself. We as a political movement and Party were prepared to share in the defence of western Europe.

Today, however, with nearly three hundred million people in western Europe and with countries reborn and remilitarized like the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the United Kingdom—and the latter two have their own nuclear arsenals—I ask if it makes any sense to over-commit our forces and keep them symbolically present in Europe at a time when the whole strategic architecture in terms of potential thrust has changed from the central flank in Europe to the Kola Peninsula, to the northern fleet of the Soviet Union, to the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Atlantic and the Canadian Arctic?

We are not the Federal Republic of Germany. We are not the United Kingdom and we are certainly not the United States. We can make our greatest commitment to defence here in the northern half of North America and in the protection of the sea lines of communication to re-supply our friends, our fellow democracies in western Europe, should we go to high alert or, heaven forbid, a shooting war.

Let there be no mistake, we have gone through the NATO commitment and we have come to the conclusion that where we belong today is not in a military alliance in Europe. We should be devoting all our resources to the northern half of North America under Canadian sovereignty and sovereign territory and in the north Atlantic.

In terms of mobile command, this will require a light transportable army. Canada should base its troops in Canada and upgrade our equipment, response time and effectiveness, starting with air transport. This would give Canada the real capability to reinforce another democracy faced with aggression. The Armed Forces would also be better equipped for peace-keeping.

A rapid response army would require rapid reinforcement from an upgraded reserve. We welcome the Minister's statement on reserves. The side and character of the reserve