

Supply

An invasion of the Japanese homeland would have resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands more lives and did not even carry with it the certainty of success. In order to prevent further death and destruction, the Allies dropped the atomic bomb. Whether or not this resulted in more deaths than would have occurred in a conventional conflict is an open question. It is something that we will never know. However, we would do well to remember that the dropping of the atomic bomb achieved the then desired result. The war ended and peace between East and West has reigned for 37 years.

The use of the atomic bomb demonstrated to the world the awesome power contained in these weapons and underlined the need for control. In the 1950s, the United States advocated international control over atomic weapons, but this was rejected by the Soviet Union. In the 1960s and 1970s, the United States and the U.S.S.R. were involved in bilateral talks to establish limits on their strategic arms. Unfortunately, while these talks were to a degree successful in placing limits on specific systems, they left it open to each superpower to build up to the limits where it was behind, and they also left many loopholes whereby the treaties could be circumvented. The Soviet Union has taken advantage of the defects in these agreements. Consequently, the Soviets have now attained parity with the United States in the area of intercontinental strategic missiles and have attained superiority in the area of intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

After the Soviet Union achieved parity in strategic nuclear weapons, the advantage in intermediate-range missiles and the development of a more accurate, mobile and longer-range missile—the SS-20—added a new dimension to the NATO-Warsaw Pact relationship. Accordingly, in December, 1979 the NATO allies decided to deploy 572 single warhead Pershing II and ground launch Cruise missiles in western Europe beginning in 1983. The Russians continued to deploy SS-20s and these now number 300. The Pershing II missile has a range of 1,100 miles; the Pershing I-A, which it will replace, has a range of 400 miles. The Cruise missile has a range of 1,500 miles. The new SS-20 missile has a range of 3,100 miles, and even if moved east of the Ural mountains, could still reach every part of western Europe. Such a launching location would be safe from all NATO theatre weapons.

The 1979 decision to deploy IRBMs in western Europe was coupled with a call for arms-control talks between the two superpowers. These talks are now in progress. In November, 1981, President Reagan offered to cancel deployment plans of the 572 Pershing II and Cruise missiles if President Brezhnev agreed to dismantle a total of 600 SS-20, SS-5 and SS-4 missiles. The Russians will not do this. Instead, they made a counter-offer to cut by two thirds the U.S. and Soviet arsenals of medium-range missiles in Europe by 1990. The proposal included the British and French nuclear forces. The key word in this proposal is "Europe". If an agreement were to be reached on this basis, the Soviets could still deploy SS-20s in Russia east of the Urals and, as I have mentioned, these would still pose a nuclear threat to Europe.

In light of this current international situation, which was clearly defined at our committee meetings, it seems incredible to me that six members of the standing committee should deem it advisable to publish a report such as is now being discussed. I would like to comment on that report.

● (1630)

The first recommendation in the minority report is for a global freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. The naivete apparent in this recommendation is astonishing. There is absolutely no way in which to verify a ban on missile production without on-site inspection, which the Soviets have said they will not allow. In addition, a nuclear freeze at this time would cement the Soviet advantage in medium-range nuclear missiles aimed at Europe and would leave the Europeans completely vulnerable to a Soviet attack.

The second recommendation is that there be no Cruise missile testing in Canada. I have many reasons as to why we cannot and should not support such a recommendation. However, I will limit myself in this short and gratis time to saying that we agreed to the modernization of nuclear weapons in 1979. The present government has concurred in the decision which was taken. We would fail in our commitment in the worst possible fashion if we were now to decide that we would not allow this vehicle to be tested in our skies.

I would like to consider the fourth recommendation next because the third recommendation warrants a longer response. The fourth recommendation is that Canada should pledge about one tenth of 1 per cent of its defence budget to disarmament efforts. Let us look at how these people wanted the money to be spent. Some of the money was to be spent in dissemination of disarmament information. Some of the propaganda put out by disarmament groups is very well meaning, but this effort could stand some additional funds in order to publish information which is a little more accurate than any I have seen to date. I have also seen what happens when well meaning schoolteachers attempt to explain nuclear warfare to their students without balancing their description with any hint of historical perspective, and I regret that very much. I also agree with Mr. Gregory Wirick, the executive director of the United Nations Association in Canada, when he told the committee, concerning the recommendation for a referendum, that in some ways it would do more harm and more damage than good.

The third recommendation is that Canada should press all nations to pledge never to be the first to use nuclear weapons. I was rather surprised when the leader of the New Democratic Party seemed to amend this recommendation slightly during his speech by suggesting that it should refer to Canada only. However, in my copy of what is called a minority report under the heading of the House of Commons—

Mr. Prud'homme: It is not the same.