

*Government Orders*

first, that would inspire others to disarm and lay down their arms as well. On the other hand, there were many who believed that the only way to achieve true lasting peace and disarmament at that time was through some form of negotiated, balanced and verifiable arrangements in order to reduce armaments and arrive at peace.

It was that difference of opinion that characterized the discussions that related to the peace issue during the 1980s. Both sides had the same objectives as far as I can see. What they did was disagree on the best way of achieving peace and disarmament.

There were a good many flash points or points that raised concerns on both sides of the House and at times there were different parties on both sides of the House making the points in different ways. Hon. members will recall the debates over cruise missile testing, something that from time to time still rises to the surface. There were debates over whether or not NATO should increase the number of nuclear missiles in Europe during that time and that generated very heated debates.

As well, those debates brought into question the very issue of NATO itself and whether we should be supporting NATO or withdrawing from it altogether. All of these issues are not really new ones and we have been living with them for a long time. Certainly in recent years they have been at the top of the agenda.

At the same time, fortunately, the cold war has now apparently come to an end in eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. In Berlin itself the walls have come down. The Iron Curtain has been removed and now we have agreements on troop withdrawals from Germany, we have agreements on nuclear arms reduction, we have agreements on conventional arms reduction. Interestingly enough, the Soviet Union which for so many years was viewed as the enemy is now considered to be not the enemy but our friend.

There are again legitimate disagreements on what role, if any, NATO and what role, if any, Canada's part in NATO played in bringing about those events of the walls coming down and bringing about a situation where the Soviet Union is now our friend and not our enemy. There are many who feel quite strongly that NATO was a minimal part or perhaps no part at all. Personally, I believe that it played a very important part in the entire process. It played a part in halting potential aggression.

It means that we stood firm and united with our allies and it allowed for those negotiated, balanced and verifiable arms reduction agreements to take place and to become reality. Hopefully we will see a time before too long when there will not be any weapons, conventional or nuclear in Europe or perhaps, hopefully, anywhere in the world.

By playing a role in that process, Canada was making a significant and a continuing contribution to our military defence force in Europe, which for that matter is still in Europe, through many years. Because we were playing that role, were involved and made a commitment, not just a commitment in words but a commitment in forces and troops, we had a voice in policy. We had a voice in influencing the disarmament positions of NATO and, for that matter, of the United States.

• (2210)

I would like to contrast that with what happened in New Zealand. New Zealand decided to opt for a position in which they banned United States military ships from the harbours of New Zealand on the basis that they might be carrying nuclear weapons. New Zealand took a stand on this issue.

In effect, New Zealand opted out of playing a role within the council of nations of the western world who were trying to bring about the peace and disarmament for which we all strive. In my view at least, New Zealand became irrelevant in that entire process.

The situation in the Persian Gulf as it now stands and the situation at that time have a good many parallels. Canadians want peace and not war. Again, they differ on the best way of achieving this. It is not just a debate that goes on in this House, it is a debate that rages probably in all of our constituencies. Each and every one of us has heard from constituents, perhaps not all the same way as I have, but I am sure opinions have been voiced on both sides of the issue, with a few shades in between.

I have heard from many who are most concerned about the fact that Canada is in the Persian Gulf at all. Those voices and concerns are voiced by people like Father Mahoney and Vi Thompson, who are prominent members of the East York Peace Committee. They are voiced by Gary Hayes as well. He is more concerned about the financial commitment that Canada has to