

*Cruise Missile Testing*

and the destabilizing impact of cruise missile technology on the international strategic balance of power.

In the few minutes I have, I would like to review two aspects of this question. First, the Liberal position on cruise missiles and the Government's position, described just now by the Hon. Member who spoke previously, and I think our conclusion must be that the Conservative Government's view is at odds with the movement toward international peace that prevails at the present time. I find it hard to believe that the Government, despite its success on the international scene, should insist on taking the hard line.

Second, I would like to stress the importance of another aspect of the same question, and I am referring to the advance cruise missiles, the so-called ACMs, which may persuade the Government that the time has come to take a close look at arms proliferation and that, if they miss this opportunity, the new class of cruise missiles will certainly create a far more destabilizing situation than we have today.

In the fall of 1987, the Leader of the Opposition, (Mr. Turner) asked the Canadian Government, in accordance with the provisions of the Canada-U.S. agreement on nuclear arms testing, to submit a notice of termination of cruise missile testing in Canada, and I would like to quote what he said:

I have always believed in honouring the Cruise missile commitment made by the Government of Canada to the United States and to our other allies, and we have honoured that commitment. I have always believed in honouring the commitments that previous Governments made.

As I said in my speech to the House of Commons when the issue was debated on March 6, we should test the Cruise missile until such time as there are concrete results in the negotiations between the two super powers on intermediate range nuclear weapons. There have been concrete results, much to the relief of the world, and I say the time has arrived to move forward in the world search for peace and for Canada to suspend Cruise missile testing in Canada.

It is clear, as the Leader of the Opposition said on October 1, that the time has come to reconsider the wisdom of continuing this agreement between Canada and the United States. I must say that the Government is playing a rather curious role in this matter. First of all, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Beatty) has refused to either confirm or deny if there had been a request for tests of this new class of cruise missiles, when the question was put to him in the House. And the Government continues to play a kind of wait-and-see game in this respect.

In a statement to the House in March 1987, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) said, and I quote:

"At the present time in Geneva, it seems that negotiations that apparently had been terminated have now been resumed. We will determine the policy of the Government of Canada in terms of what is decided in Geneva".

• (1430)

[English]

In October, as I indicated, progress was indeed made, and the Government refuses to face the fact that to pursue cruise missile testing is destabilizing. The Government had the chance to review its position and come clean on this question, but it still argues that its decision to continue testing the cruise is based on the rationale that the testing under the umbrella agreement contributes to stable nuclear deterrence.

I have serious concerns about that. How can a policy that creates the conditions for arms proliferation contribute to stable deterrence? It is clear, in the context of the information negotiations signed in Washington in December, 1987, the Government's policy is most definitely not in keeping with the atmosphere.

[Translation]

As was mentioned earlier this afternoon, a poll published recently indicated a significant shift in the position of Canadians on cruise missile testing. Fifty per cent of those surveyed are now opposed to the testing, 38 per cent are for it and 8 per cent are undecided. What is even more interesting is that when asked by pollsters whether they were aware cruise missiles were tested over Canadian territory, many people replied they did not know.

Of those 17 per cent of the Canadian people who were not aware of the test, 68 per cent said no when they were asked: "Do you want such testing to be done over Canadian territory, yes or no?" It is a cry from the heart, the immediate and spontaneous reaction of people to a factual situation that should be terminated as soon as possible.

In conclude with the opinion that a consensus seems to be emerging on that issue in Canada, and that Canadians are no longer in favour of cruise missile testing.

[English]

In the face of this the Government persists in playing hide and seek on its policy concerning testing of the advanced cruise missile, a truly dangerous cousin to the air launched cruise missile because of its improved speed and stealth technology. Testing of such weapons in Canada's North would up the ante.

I want to quote Mr. John Barrett, Deputy Director of the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, who said that the ACM may pose a greater threat to the strategic balance than the version tested because it will be faster and harder to detect. That statement was made on January 20 after the last cruise missile test on Canadian soil. He went on to say that the Soviet Union might view deployment of the ACM as a U.S. attempt to develop a clear capability to carry out a first strike nuclear attack.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), when we questioned him on this and asked him to review the Government's position, said that he was reaffirming the Canadian goal of