

Staff from several government departments are involved in the current feasibility study. A consulting firm has been retained. One consultant's report has been received with a second expected shortly. The interaction of the proposed new eastern pipeline and the existing Portland-Montreal pipeline system, as well as the proposed extension of the western crude oil supply pipeline to Montreal, is one of the important aspects of this study. There is a good possibility that at very little additional capital investment, any of these pipelines could be made reversible. In this manner, in times of emergency, the flow of oil could be reversed to supply east coast refiners with western Canadian crude oil.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—POSITION OF ARMED FORCES MEMBERS ATTACHED TO NORAD FOLLOWING SPECIAL ALERT ORDERED BY PRESIDENT NIXON ON OCTOBER 25

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, the questions asked of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) by myself and several other members yesterday and today in respect of Canadian involvement in the placing of American forces on Defence Condition III on or about midnight, October 24, and the answers given by the minister raise three important issues which are worthy of discussion. They are, first, was proper judgment exercised by senior Canadian military personnel in delaying notifying, for up to eight hours, the appropriate political authorities of the change in readiness of American forces; second, were Canadian troops actually involved in the alert without prior Canadian authorization; and, third, is NORAD an asset or a liability for Canada.

Let me deal with each of these questions in turn. First, was proper judgment exercised by the military in failing to inform the minister immediately of the change in alert status? My answer to this question is an unequivocal no. The minister, in answer to my question today, indicated that he, on the contrary, had absolute confidence in the judgment of the chief of defence staff and that events had proven that gentleman to have been right in deciding to avoid disturbing the minister's slumbers. After all, only American forces were involved.

The minister's statement was, with all due deference, patent nonsense. First of all, the general competence of the chief of defence staff has not been called into question. What has been called into question is his judgment in this particular instance.

Second, whether or not the general was proved right by events that Canadian security was not substantially affected is totally beside the point. That is a question for the democratically elected representatives of the people to decide, and not the military. I remind the House that our European allies in NATO were extremely bitter about their lack of notification regarding the American action. We received some notification, but our political leaders were not apprised of the situation until hours later and our Minister of National Defence wishes to defend the situation. Well, Mr. Speaker, either our European allies in NATO are hysterical and compulsive worriers, or our Minister of National Defence is entirely too soporific and complacent. I incline to the latter view.

Adjournment Motion

Remember the situation. There was a shooting war in the Middle East. The United States and the Soviet Union were confronting each other in the area, although hidden behind their client states. Then, by executive action, American forces were placed on DEFCON III. What was the reason? Was it for fun? Was it because of a military threat? Was it to make the people of the United States forget the president's domestic political difficulties?

Should Canada be involved? Would Canada be involved, whether or not she wished to be? There is no question in my mind that the answers to those questions must be provided by the duly elected government of the country and that the answers should have been sought by the government immediately. Thus, the chief of defence staff was absolutely wrong in not advising the minister immediately he had news of the situation, which seems to have been about midnight, on October 24, and not 7.30 a.m. of October 25, when he eventually did tell the minister. The situation is this: either the general made that judgment, or the minister's instructions to the chief of defence staff about when his sleep should be disturbed are totally devoid of reality. I simply cannot believe, despite his assertions to the contrary, that the minister is happy with what happened on October 25. I would, therefore, like to know what instructions he has issued in an effort to avoid such blunders in the future.

● (2210)

The second major question raised by the events of October 25 is whether or not Canadian Armed Forces personnel were involved in a military alert without the knowledge or prior approval of this government. When I asked that question of the minister on October 25, his reply was, in effect, no. That answer was extremely misleading.

NORAD has a totally integrated command structure, communications network, radio network and aircraft guidance system. Canadians and Americans work together in all of the eight NORAD regions, a Canadian doing one job, an American another. Thus, the Continental Air Defence Command of the United States could not possibly have been moved to Defcon III without Canadians having been involved. It is nonsense to say otherwise and the minister as much as admitted the fact when he said yesterday at page 8793 of *Hansard*:

There were some individuals in integrated staff positions who in the early stages would have been involved in the normal course of their duties, but they were not formally on alert and the country was not on alert.

That answer raises more questions than it answers. Does it mean that Canadians were relieved of their duties by Americans and that for the duration of the alert, which lasted several days, seven of the NORAD districts were manned entirely by Americans? If so, were the integrated command and direction structures of NORAD abandoned for the period of the alert and is the government happy with such a situation? If such was not the case, how much stock can we place in the minister's assertion that Canadians were not involved? Not much. Neither of the alternatives is acceptable.

The third major question raised by the events of October 25 is that of whether NORAD on balance is an advantage or a disadvantage to Canadians. I ask hon. members