

Nuclear Powered Submarines

and up to 12 conventional submarines at a price some \$2 billion more than our proposed expenditures.

Acquisition of conventional submarines would be a colossal waste of money. Even worse, it would be a dangerous and fraudulent waste of money. Such expenditure would try to delude the Canadian people that our defence needs are satisfied, and even worse would expose our submariners to a disastrously uneven contest in any conflict.

Given the military capacity of our potential adversary, we would be emulating the unhappy Polish cavalry who tried to halt the German Panzer divisions with horses and swords in 1939. That is the reality of the utility of conventional submarines.

The Canadian taxpayer, and certainly our long-suffering sailors, deserve capable equipment. The issue really is not should we or should we not have nuclear powered submarines. The real question is: Do we still need a Navy? The answer clearly is a resounding yes. Even the opposition defence critics agree.

We cannot afford quantity, even though our huge ocean expanses, our lengthy seashore, and our heavy dependence on ocean trade suggests we do indeed need quantity. The obvious route, the only sensible route, is to seek cost-effectiveness for what we do acquire. That means the SSN's.

The acquisition program upon which we have embarked calls for delivery of boat No. 1 in 1996, boat No. 2 in 1998, and one boat every 18 months thereafter until program completion in about the year 2010, which is 22 years from now.

There is an urgency to get on with the contract process because of the lengthy lead times required. We already face the prospect of a gap between the time when our three conventional submarines are scrapped for safety reasons and the time when the new boats come into service.

Thus we must get on with the task of replacement. The pending decision of country of source is still to be made, and we will need another two years of contract definition and contract allocation before commencing construction. We have lots of time between now and 1996 to change, amend, even cancel the program. What we do not have is time now to procrastinate. It may be the NDP's favourite policy on most subjects, but not ours. We see action as essential.

I look for an early decision and early action on this vital question of which submarine to buy. Whether to buy is long since decided.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this debate brought forward by the New Democratic Party. The Canadian Government's intention to acquire nuclear-powered submarines, commonly known as SSN's, is entirely consistent with Canada's long-standing renunciation of both nuclear weapons for Canada and nuclear roles for the Canadian Armed Forces. These vessels

utilize nuclear power for the purposes of propulsion only. They will not carry nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices of any sort.

The principle of using nuclear power for propulsion is much the same as using nuclear power to generate hydro-electricity energy which is a common practice throughout Canada and the industrialized world. It is fully compatible with our commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons.

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Because of its size, Canada has some unique problems and some unique responsibilities. We must keep certain vital sea lanes open in our three-ocean perspective. We must accept our role in defending sea lanes which are vital to western Europe and no one can deny the importance the Pacific Rim will play in the near future to our way of life. Even the New Democratic Party accepts the concept of the three-ocean perspective.

The submarines will not only be used in the Arctic, they will serve our entire territory, the Arctic, the Pacific and the Atlantic. During the previous Government, our entire Armed Forces were allowed to deteriorate to a level never seen. After World War II, we had the third largest Navy and proud officers and sailors serving our country. This Government has been able to give back some of the needed improvements.

The nuclear powered submarines will be the cornerstone of the new Navy. The SSN has unlimited underwater endurance when compared to the conventional submarine, which must spend at least 15 per cent of its time recharging on the surface. That alone should prove the necessity of the nuclear submarine. If one of our submarines was going from Halifax to Vancouver using the North West Passage, which is normally a two-week trip, an intruder would have to assume that he could come in contact with a Canadian submarine anywhere in our territory. One week a submarine could be in the Atlantic and two weeks later, having travelled under our Arctic water, could find itself on our Pacific coast. As for showing the flag, once in port, like any other submarine, they surface but once they leave port they again become invisible.

We have heard so much about the need to protect our own territory instead of letting other countries do so. I am quite sure that everyone is aware that Canada has the longest coastline in the world. I believe it is estimated at some 37,000 miles, so we can see the great advantage of the nuclear powered submarines. We must be able to control our waters in the three oceans, and the nuclear-powered submarine will do this.

Another benefit of the nuclear-powered submarine is that it will be less polluting. The cost of owning these submarines, as has been pointed out, is \$300 million a year spread over 27 years. It's all very well to have a sign put up in the North West Passage saying, "Keep out. Canadian territory", but it is even better to have a big watchdog on a leash. There was an interesting letter published in the *Citizen* yesterday with respect to nuclear subs. It reads: