

Adjournment Debate

is not a unilateral nuclear disarmament but a multilateral verifiable nuclear disarmament. It is only a multilateral verifiable nuclear disarmament which will ensure that we can continue to maintain our Canadian democratic values and institutions, to maintain the rule of law, to control our own country, to prevent war, to deter aggression, and to settle disputes peacefully.

This is why we in Government have in the past and will continue in the future to support NATO and co-operate with the United States in the defence of North America.

The Canadian Ambassador to NATO, Mr. Gordon Smith, told me last week that our commitment to NATO is the reason Canada is consulted by the United States in all negotiations which take place with a view to bringing about nuclear disarmament. The United States consults all its NATO allies. It consults Japan, it consults Australia, but it does not consult Switzerland or Sweden. It no longer consults New Zealand, since New Zealand decided to ban American ships from its ports on the basis that they might be carrying nuclear weapons or might have some sort of nuclear power. It is the basis of the right to be consulted and the fact that we are consulted which rests on our commitment to NATO.

While we may not have the ability to negotiate or the influence to change everything we would like to change in the way of the nuclear problems of the world, we have the power to be consulted, and we are consulted because of the commitment to NATO. Perhaps, because of that, we can shift the approach taken to negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

If we decided to leave NATO or, for that matter, unilaterally declared Canada to be a nuclear free zone, we would be forfeiting the ability to influence in some way the negotiations for nuclear disarmament or for other kinds of conventional disarmament, perhaps the consultations on the first use of nuclear weapons in Europe, or the decision to use nuclear weapons first, before anyone else does. We would be forfeiting the right to consultation. It makes no sense for us to forfeit that right or to get out of NATO, nor does it make any sense for us unilaterally to declare Canada a nuclear free zone. Whatever happens in a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union, whether or not we are a nuclear free zone will not save our hides.

Because of that it is disturbing to hear that the Liberal Party of Canada, in its most recent convention, adopted a resolution which called upon Canada to become a nuclear free zone. It was distressing to hear members of the Liberal Party saying that it was now official policy of the Liberal Party that Canada be a nuclear free zone.

It is interesting that the former defence critic for the Liberal Party indicated that if that happened no longer could American warships call in Canadian ports, and that we would virtually be in the same position as New Zealand. It is interesting to note that the Liberal Member who said that is no longer the defence critic for the Liberal Party.

• (1820)

It is disturbing as well to hear one Member of the Liberal Party, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata), say that world peace is more important than membership in NATO. You and I know, Mr. Speaker, that NATO is synonymous with world peace. In fact, it has guaranteed peace in Europe and peace, as far as we are concerned in Canada, for the last 38 years. Of course it is not surprising when members of the New Democratic Party advocate that we get out of NATO or advocate a unilateral declaration of a nuclear free zone in Canada because that has been part of the NDP policy since 1969. It is not surprising when we hear New Democrats talking about it. But it is surprising and disturbing when we hear the Liberal Party talk about this same thing, particularly when Liberals have been such strong supporters of NATO and a multilateral and verifiable nuclear disarmament all these years yet now suddenly they are changing.

When it is time for the next election and the New Democrats and Liberals are asking for your support, Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will consider very carefully the things they have been saying in the last few weeks and months about this issue of nuclear disarmament, NATO and about their commitments to NATO. As you well know, if we elect a Government which is not supportive of NATO, is not supportive of multilateral and verifiable disarmament, we are going to take ourselves out of the game of playing a role in the disarmament negotiations and risking at the same time Canadian democracy, values and institutions under the rule of law. That, I hope, you will bear in mind at the time of the next election, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bud Bradley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, this is the fifth time in the last five days that I have had the honour to stand and address you in my place. I only wish the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) could have been present. She alluded a short time ago in my constituency to the fact that she never sees me in the House and never hears me speak. This would have been a good opportunity for her.

I recall too clearly the confusion surrounding the resolutions regarding NATO that came out of the Liberal Party Convention in Ottawa in late November. Of course, I share my hon. colleague's concern about the kind of signal this sent to our allies. However, rather than dwell on what the Liberal Party stands for, let me repeat what the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Beatty) said in this House on December 1, 1986. He said:

—anything which substantially weakens Canada's commitment to NATO would indeed weaken the western alliance and not contribute to the fulfillment of peace.

This statement, Mr. Speaker, parallels what the now Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) said when he was Prime Minister, that if we are going to have any influence in working toward world peace we must first of all fulfil our commitments to our NATO allies.