

Cruise Missile Testing

prepared to eliminate its weapons without the reciprocal obligations of arms control or disarmament agreement?

Ms. Jewett: That is what START is all about.

● (1420)

Mrs. Sparrow: Do Members of this House really believe that the Soviet Union would have agreed to eliminate its entire intermediate-range missile forces if the alliance had refused to deploy its own INF forces in the mid-1980s?

It was the unbreakable unity of the NATO allies in supporting the maintenance of an effective nuclear deterrent that compelled the Soviet Union to return to the negotiating table and continue the process which culminated in the historic INF treaty signed in Washington last December. This treaty is an historic arms control and disarmament agreement in the sense that it represents the first time that an entire category of nuclear arms has been eliminated.

As the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said in his statement issued at the time of the Washington Summit, President Reagan can justifiably claim great success. It was he who provided the vision in his zero option proposal of 1981. It was he who held firm against those who wanted to freeze these weapons at levels still threatening to the West. It was he who had the courage to distinguish between firmness and intransigence.

We must show equal firmness and resolve in the future. I think it clearly follows from the INF experience that if we wish to see similar progress made in the strategic arms control negotiations, the U.S.A. and its allies must display the same political solidarity. The maintenance of an effective strategic deterrent must be supported in the same manner the allies supported a credible theatre nuclear deterrent throughout the U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms control negotiation process.

For Canada, the most tangible expression of this support has been its involvement in the co-operative testing of the U.S.A. air launched cruise missile, a crucial element of the strategic bomber forces that helps provide a nuclear deterrent for NATO as a whole. This is our concrete contribution to ensuring the credibility of the alliance's nuclear deterrent. It is a modest one at that compared to those of our allies who actually have nuclear weapons deployed on their territory.

Some have claimed wrongly that Canada's testing of the air launched cruise missile was to cease once an INF Accord had been reached. The reason this Government, and for that matter its predecessor, has never established a rigid linkage between the outcome of INF negotiations in Europe and the continuation of the co-operative testing program for the air launched cruise missile is relatively straightforward. The cruise missiles that are affected by the INF agreement are ground launched cruise missiles deployed as part of a European theatre nuclear deterrent. In contrast, the cruise missiles that are being tested here in Canada under our arrangement with the U.S.A. are air launched cruise missiles that form part

of the U.S.A. strategic deterrent forces and constitute the alliance's ultimate nuclear deterrent against attack.

The relative importance of these U.S.A.-based strategic deterrent forces in maintaining the over-all balance of nuclear deterrence will increase in the wake of an INF agreement eliminating United States missiles in Europe. In this connection, ensuring the reliability and effectiveness of the air launched cruise missile through the co-operative testing program with the U.S.A. becomes more rather than less compelling in the context of an INF agreement, and I mean compelling from an arms control as much as from a defence perspective.

One of the Government's priority objectives in its arms control and disarmament policy is the enhancement of strategic stability. The air launched cruise missile with its long flight time and its relatively slow, recallable carrier is currently among the most stabilizing elements of nuclear deterrent forces. It does not pose, for example, the first strike capacity of the fast flying, invulnerable to attack intercontinental ballistic missile.

We believe nonetheless that cruise missiles too should be subject to arms control restraints and have supported the inclusion of air launched cruise missiles in the limits on strategic nuclear arms currently being negotiated at the U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. Geneva talks. By giving air launched cruise missiles a greater role in the nuclear force structure of each superpower at the expense of ballistic missiles, the first strike potential of the respective forces will be reduced. In this way, air launched cruise missiles can actually contribute to enhancing strategic stability in the context of the 50 per cent reduction of strategic arms envisaged by a strategic arms control agreement.

Canada has consistently supported the agreed U.S.A. and Soviet objective of a 50 per cent cut in their strategic arsenals. We have also advocated the negotiation of effective limits on long range air and sea launched cruise missiles. In addition, we have regularly conveyed our views to both negotiating parties on how this joint aim of radical reductions in strategic weaponry can best be realized.

Canada's commitment to arms control and disarmament and the maintenance of a stable and agreed arms control regime is well known. Our work in verification research is a practical contribution second to none. This is important work and work we intend to vigorously pursue.

It is through informed allied solidarity and a constructive negotiating approach rather than by means of unbalanced and self-denying actions that progress in arms control is best assured. That is why I cannot support the motion before us today.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak on the subject of cruise missiles