

Government Orders

give up their nuclear weapons when we are acquiescing to the testing of the cruise missile.

We were here all day yesterday debating the war in Bosnia and what role this House should take. I really believe that these debates are very refreshing. I am glad to see that the Reform Party is not sticking together on the issue. They are expressing genuinely different points of view and I think that can be said about the House as a whole.

I guess at some point in time we have to say that we have enough weapons of mass destruction. We are just dealing now with the cruise, but there are biological and chemical weapons that exist on this fragile planet. To take a phrase from Project Ploughshares from my community it is time to turn some of that weaponry into ploughshares. It is time to turn some of those swords into ploughshares.

If a country like Canada, with our special standing in the world as a middle power and really of little threat as an aggressor, is unable to do that then my question has to be this. What country is going to take the first step?

Mr. Lee: Madam Speaker, the hon. member makes a wonderful point here. The issue of the nuclear stockpile is out there and is unresolved by the entire global community. As I understand it I think the Ukraine has reached an agreement to liquidate, store away, give away or trade away its nuclear stockpile. That was a real plus. I hope they get to the end of their inventory.

However, I fall back on the remarks I made earlier that I view the cruise missile as a delivery system. Maybe it will be the very best delivery system we have ever developed. Maybe the cruise missile and developments of the cruise missile will become the flying saucer of the planet earth because of its ability to move in an unmanned way and guide itself. Let us forget about the sausage shape for now. It does not have to carry a nuclear warhead.

Canada has insisted that none of the cruise missiles in Canada will carry nuclear warheads. Canada is in the forefront in the world in convincing countries to abandon their nuclear capability. I point out the regional dispute between India and Pakistan involving their own alleged nuclear capabilities and the arguments about delivery systems also.

I hope that my children's children will have fewer nuclear warheads to worry about than that which the hon. member and the rest of us have to worry about now.

• (2130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): I am pleased to participate as the member for Richmond—Wolfe in this debate

on cruise missiles and I would like to send warm greetings to all the voters in my constituency of Richmond—Wolfe who placed their trust in me last October 25 and gave me a clear mandate.

Obviously, we must examine this particular issue within a broader context. The Bloc Québécois would have liked the government to undertake a comprehensive review of national defence policy. Nevertheless, for a sovereigntist member of Parliament and member of the Bloc Québécois, the Canada-US Test and Evaluation Program, or if you prefer, the agreement on cruise missile testing, is critically important. This kind of debate on the relevance of allowing new tests to take place over Canadian territory during the course of this year highlights in particular the role of a sovereign Quebec with respect to western agreements on military strategy.

There are three distinct types of cruise missiles, namely the surface, sea and air varieties. The cruise missile tested in Canada falls into the third category of weapon. It is primarily the vehicle, or delivery system, which determines whether these weapons will or will not be subject to disarmament agreements or nuclear weapons verification control. The most stringent control measures of all have been adopted in the case of the air and sea version of these missiles.

One of the means available for verifying nuclear arms during the cold war and for maintaining a certain balance between the superpowers was the National Technical Means, that is a verification technique based on information obtained by superpowers about the weapons of foreign countries.

For instance, if a superpower formally announces that it is going to test a specific type of weapon and if the other superpower discovers, through its verification techniques, that the weapon in question is not consistent with the formal announcements made, then the whole balance of deterrence is called into question and the mutual trust of the two superpowers is shaken. And we know how important trust is in such matters.

Therefore, it is extremely important that Canada, as an ally of the United States, stand by its commitment and guarantee its co-operation in the area of strategic weapons testing so that it does not impede international disarmament procedures and in the process fuel the nuclear race.

All of the verification, monitoring and voluntary disarmament techniques to which the superpowers agreed under the SALT I and SALT II treaties have since been superseded by new agreements such as the INF, which stands for Intermediate Nuclear Force, and START I and START II. Today these verification techniques still form the basis of arms control. Canada cannot disregard them. It must ensure compliance with these agreements to limit the nuclear threat.