

Statements by Ministers

had come from the Soviet Union in the past with our thinking and our way of living and to the desire of the western world for peace. I am glad we have been informed that in the month of June, there will be another delegation of Russians coming to meet Canadian Parliamentarians. I think we should encourage that type of thing because it helps when people who are perhaps not in a position of power but who have contacts and access to people in positions of power bring about more understanding and comprehension between the people.

As the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) said, political contributions and dialogues are extremely important. We never know if a dialogue is making a contribution, but it is a fact that when we talk to each other, there is a chance of doing something. However, when we do not talk but live in complete isolation, we live in a very narrow corridor which sometimes leads to confrontations. However, when we talk, we can always find a corridor that will lead to solving the problem. I think what we should do is to help improve the dialogue, but we should put some pressure on the Americans to show the Soviet Union that the Americans are not living in isolation.

I do not know whether or not we should at this time reconsider our position on the Cruise missile. This was an issue during the period of time when the Alliance wanted to see solidarity and wanted to see if, in a period of crisis, we would stick together. We are all democracies and want to show that we can participate in decisions and not only follow those that come from Washington.

As the Secretary of State for External Affairs pointed out, there was a meeting of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the other leaders with Mr. Reagan after he met with Mr. Gorbachev in Geneva. Showing that we can talk together and that we can influence each other might be a good way of creating a better climate for peace.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I think that Mr. Gorbachev's proposal deserves serious consideration: without being naïve we should keep in mind that it does include some questions which—we would not have believed that a few months ago—might be raised around the negotiation table and which are there now.

Peace must be given a chance, and we ought to tell our American friends that they must take this proposal seriously—the ball is in their court, so to speak—so that later on we will not be accused of having missed a good opportunity.

I urge the Minister to continue along those lines and I think he should now give special consideration to the Strategic Defence Initiative issue, Star Wars, to show that if nuclear disarmament is possible then there is no need for a defence against a weapon that will disappear. In any case, the problem I am raising will not be an easy one for him, but I think it deserves every consideration.

I also urge him to promote exchanges so as to prevent a cold war climate such as we had two years ago. We should resume political, cultural and economic exchanges with the Soviet

Union because, that is the way it is, if our interdependence with them grows stronger we will inevitably be forced to live in peace and reject war, particularly nuclear war which in fact would end in world-wide destruction, and that is what we want to avoid at all costs.

[English]

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) for making a statement in the House today on the U.S./U.S.S.R. nuclear arms control negotiations. I agree that there were some very significant elements in the Gorbachev proposals, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs has mentioned several of them including a genuine reaching out for on-site verification and a willingness to put off until Phase II the inclusion of discussions of French, British, Chinese and other nuclear weapons. I also agree that it was disappointing that we did not see the question of SS-20s in Soviet Asia raised by Gorbachev.

I recall the meeting to which the Hon. Member who just spoke referred which occurred when Mr. Gorbachev was in Canada in 1983, I believe. In committee, I asked him in very brief detail about what at that time were 110 SS-20s on the Chinese border. Indeed, I found his answer to be somewhat hopeful even then in the sense that it was an embarrassment to have this being brought up constantly. The sheer numbers are mind-boggling. Even at that time, as I recall, the matter was not immediately dismissed as being one which could be legitimately included in discussions and negotiations. Perhaps I was looking at the matter in my usual optimistic way and it may not have been as strong as that. However, I certainly received the impression that it was not out of the question in terms of being discussed. It was not rejected out of hand.

● (1540)

With respect to the Gorbachev proposals, surely the Minister has missed what I found to be the most exciting aspect of them, that is to say that there is a timetable. To my knowledge it is the first time that either major power has said more than that they are simply working toward total disarmament, or total nuclear disarmament, but have actually provided a timetable with respect to it. Of all the Gorbachev proposals I found that one to be the most innovative.

Phase I deals with strategic weapons which are capable of attacking the other power's homeland, although there will be some difference of opinion with respect to the definition of that particular strategic weapon. Phase II, which would begin in 1990, proposes that other nations join in the elimination of nuclear missiles and nuclear battlefield weapons. The third phase, which would take us up to 1999, calls for the elimination of all remaining nuclear arms.

The idea of setting a timetable is not only innovative but it gives us all something to look forward to down the line. It gives a measure of hope even greater than the hope we are securing from the fact that negotiations are now taking place in Geneva. It makes one feel as if we might make it to the end of the century. I would have liked the Minister and his Depart-