

naries, then at least we should start charging the Europeans some billion dollars or more a year to keep our troops there.

**Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate today. I was a little surprised at the motion that was put forward by the NDP for this opposition day debate, but I welcome it. It gives us an opportunity to lay out the facts and dispel the fiction about ARMX, the Armed Forces Training Technology exhibition, which will take place in Ottawa next week. All we are hearing from the NDP are mistruths about this particular event.

I listened to the Hon. Member across the floor as he got into all sorts of other defence issues, I would certainly enjoy debating him on some of those. It is interesting to note that the NDP's position on NATO is still to withdraw from NATO but not necessarily withdraw until the time is right. Quite honestly, that kind of a foreign and defence policy certainly would not wash with our allies, as I am sure even the Liberals would admit.

It was interesting when the Hon. Member talked about arms control. I represented our Government in Vienna two months ago at the opening of the conventional arms talks, and it was positive meeting. There was a sense between our NATO allies and the Warsaw countries that this may be the time to make some real progress in the reduction of conventional arms. But this has only come about through our strength, through our allies in NATO. We have held a strong position for the last 40 years, and they are now willing to negotiate. If we had not had that strength, and NATO, we would never be in the position today where we are looking forward to a reduction in conventional and nuclear arms in Europe and around the world.

Coming back to the point of the debate today, I would like to speak specifically about ARMX. Starting with a little history, ARMX, the Armed Forces Training Technology Exhibition, began in 1983, an exhibition at the mobile command headquarters in St. Hubert, Québec. Its focus was and still is on training, technology, including the use of simulation devices. The point of creating such an exhibition was to allow members of the Armed Forces contact with industry to see what the training technology industry had to offer and to allow industry a first-hand opportunity of learning the needs of the Canadian forces. Although ARMX has grown and evolved over the years, its basic purpose has not

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changed. It has three primary goals: first, to demonstrate modern technology, especially training technology, to as many senior commanders and staff users as possible; second, to acquaint Canadian and international industry with training equipment requirements of the Canadian Forces, and finally to encourage industry to industry related relationships between Canadian and international sources of technology and provide a forum for a potential investment and industrial co-operation.

What is so threatening about all that? It is merely bringing people together in a cost-effective way to make us more efficient in our Department and to bring us up-to-date with what is happening in the training technology area.

I would also like to clarify the role of the Department of National Defence in ARMX and the reason for our continuing interest in its success. Our job in the Department of National Defence—I would like to make this very clear because I have heard some confusing discussion over the last few weeks about it—is to safeguard our country's sovereignty and security. This involves a vast range of national and international commitments. It includes our commitments to collective security through NORAD and NATO as well as to our international peacekeeping operations. In order to fulfil these commitments, the Canadian Forces, the men and women who serve in our Forces in Canada and around the world in NATO and in peace-keeping operations, we need the most effective training and technology methods and equipment that we can acquire. We all know that we have a finite budget, and we live within the constraints of our budgets and resources. We need the assistance of industry to better equip our forces. We need new ideas to improve our training.

Let me explain why modern simulation capabilities are cost effective and are very important to the training activities of the Canadian Forces. It is much less expensive for members of the Canadian Forces to train on simulators rather than using valuable equipment. Such equipment is usually expensive to operate and can be risky if used by inexperienced personnel. Training modules save time and money in almost every forum of training in the military. Such training devices range from drones and flight simulators to electronic rifle ranges and advanced naval tactic simulators. It is obvious that if you spend hours working with the simulator, such as in air-flight training, by the time you get up in the air, you will have a lot more confidence and expertise. That