

than any other NATO ally, with the exception of Luxembourg. We daily send our courageous military personnel out in obsolete equipment and ask them to carry out dangerous assignments. Canadians everywhere value the dedication and devotion of our Armed Forces and do not expect them, nor shall we ask them, to risk their lives in this type of equipment.

I say with sadness that this pattern of neglect, over 15 years, of the conventional deterrent has damaged our reputation for reliability among our allies. It has commensurately diminished our influence in the same councils. Mr. Speaker, I take no pleasure in setting out these facts and Canadians take no pride in acknowledging their accuracy. Some things must be said and these are among them today.

Such neglect of the conventional deterrent has contributed to an over-reliance on nuclear weapons. This is the tragedy. There is the genesis of the problem set out here today. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot echo support for NATO and consistently neglect, over a decade and a half, support for our Armed Forces. Our alliance commitments in the conventional area can and must be honoured. We cannot continue to flail at the nuclear umbrella and not be prepared to enhance the conventional deterrent. A determined effort must be made to reduce our present dependence on a possible early use of nuclear weapons by substantially improving the conventional component of our defence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, while we cannot—at least in the foreseeable future—hope to escape from using nuclear weapons to deter aggression, we must make an energetic attempt to reduce NATO's present dependence on the early use of nuclear weapons, even as a deterrent. Efforts to improve the non-nuclear deterrent—and my words are almost identical to those used by the Prime Minister—as any right-thinking person will realize, are most urgently required and should be a task of high political priority in Canada and all other NATO countries. If we are not to sell our most cherished values short, we must accept the requirement of effective conventional forces. General Bernard Rogers, the present Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, stated in the summer of 1982, that major improvements in NATO's conventional forces were feasible at a modest price. These improvements, he said, would permit a shift from the present strategy requiring the early use of nuclear weapons to a strategy of "no early use of nuclear weapons." General Rogers estimated the cost to be approximately 1 per cent greater than the 3 per cent annual real increase which NATO agreed to in 1978. Rogers further pointed out that this 1 per cent annual increase in real terms is slightly more than \$10 (U.S.) per man, woman and child throughout NATO.

[*English*]

A further report analysing these possibilities for moving away from NATO's present nuclear reliance was conducted by the prestigious European security study. Their report concludes that NATO's conventional forces could be strengthened

*The Address—Mr. Mulroney*

substantially at a total cost similar to that of the MX missile. Only after conventional defence improvements are in place could NATO ministers consider setting in motion a series of plans and programs which could ultimately reduce, as reduce they must, the recourse to nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances.

The enhanced Western conventional deterrent I have described should be designed to prevent the Warsaw Pact from achieving a rapid strategic success. As a result, arms control could be used as a means to introduce incentives which would help move nuclear forces away from provocative and destabilizing postures. We stand ready, Mr. Speaker, to accept this policy. We genuinely believe that the overwhelming majority of Canadians are prepared to accept this approach. A new Government will encourage this kind of action. Only by so doing can we help to eliminate, as we must, the threat of nuclear escalation.

● (1220)

It is my belief and that of my colleagues that minimizing the recourse to such weapons is a major step toward nuclear disarmament and security. But all of this is possible only through a consistent application of the three fundamental principles to which I referred; namely, that Canada's foreign policy should rest on a bipartisan search for consensus. This is a noble obligation of the Government and I again urge the Prime Minister never to forget that all Members of Parliament are interested in this process and ready at all times to contribute to the initiative. The second cornerstone of our security is the NATO framework; and finally, only through the strengthening of the non nuclear deterrent can we reduce the present reliance on nuclear weapons.

I urge the Government, I urge the Prime Minister and indeed all of us in the House to revitalize, among other things, public support for alliance security, because only through such support can the political cohesion of the alliance be maintained.

This does not in any way preclude initiatives by member nations that are consistent with the broad, general thrust of the political objectives of the alliance. It does not in any way preclude the kind of ongoing dialogue between governments that might, however modestly, make for a better day in the area of the search for a durable peace. But only through such support can the political cohesion and the integrity of this alliance be maintained, thereby leading, in my judgment, to the consideration, and hopefully the adoption, of those measures which lead to substantial reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe and throughout the world. We must walk the road to peace together.

I suppose I am like everyone in the Chamber and most people across Canada. I have three young children at home to whom I want to leave a world free of the threat of nuclear war. This would be the greatest gift that we could give to the children of mankind. But to succeed in this dream we must strive with greater resolve. We must negotiate with greater