

The proper examination of whether to go ahead with cruise missile testing or not in the future is within the defence review and not at the present time.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to this issue because I would like to hear the views of the members who are taking part in the debate today, with respect to employment.

• (2025)

The previous speaker said that NAFTA would allow us to have access to these new technologies. But we must not forget that those are classified technologies, since they are designed for military purposes by the American DOD. Therefore, specific agreements would have to be made with the United States to enable Canadian contractors to have access to this type of high technology and to get the R and D contracts for that technology. I would like to hear the opinion of the hon. member for Labrador on this issue.

[English]

Mr. Rompkey: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I caught the whole question. I apologize but I wonder if the hon. member would simply repeat the question please.

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, the point is with NAFTA you have access to the markets over there but in the case in question here this is classified technology. It is not obvious that the DOD will give us this access or will give it to our suppliers. What is your opinion on what your government should do to ensure that the Americans give our suppliers access to that technology and to the R and D contracts that go with it?

Mr. Rompkey: Madam Speaker, I do not think I was the one who brought up NAFTA. I think it was the hon. member for Saint John.

Nevertheless it seems to me that there are a number of ways in which that information can be shared. We do have defence agreements with the U.S. We have defence production agreements and we have a number of mechanisms whereby information can be shared. I think it is entirely possible within the various co-operation agreements that we have and within the various alliances that we have to ask and to get the United States to share the kind of information that the hon. member is talking about.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]

[English]

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here to participate in this very important debate. Before I get into my speech I would just like to point out a couple of comments that were made by the member for Saint John and the member for Labrador. They want

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to differentiate between cruise missile testing and whether it is carrying nuclear weapons or conventional weapons.

I would like to point out that whether it is conventional or nuclear, it is a weapon of destruction. This is a weapon of war we are talking about. The conventional weapon kills a few less people, but it kills people nonetheless.

I would like to thank my colleague the Minister of National Defence and his parliamentary secretary for this opportunity. I am proud that my party and the leader of my party, the right hon. Prime Minister, is giving the House the chance to discuss this matter before final decisions are made.

The issue of cruise missile testing is a sensitive one for the people of the Northwest Territories. As a member of Parliament from the NWT it is my duty and privilege to bring their views to this Chamber.

The people of the Northwest Territories have a strong and deep conviction on this matter. Since 1984, when testing began over the Mackenzie Valley, the legislative assembly of the Northwest Territories passed six resolutions opposing these tests. Numerous letters of concern have been sent from the NWT government and from individual residents of the Northwest Territories.

Despite these clear and frequent expressions of the will of the people of the Northwest Territories, the missile testing agreement has been renewed again and again. Over northern objections, the initial testing agreement was renewed in 1988 for a further five years. In 1989 the Government of Canada agreed to allow the testing of the advanced cruise missiles. In 1993 the government agreed to a ten-year renewal without even consulting the government of the Northwest Territories.

• (2030)

Northerners were shocked by this total disregard for their concerns and felt that their voices had not been heard on this issue. At the heart of the matter for northerners is their right to determine what happens on their territory.

The Northwest Territories is a vast land but it is not an empty land. The aboriginal people of the Western Arctic in the region where the tests take place, the Dene and the Inuvialuit, have lived there for thousands of years. Much more recently, non-aboriginal people have chosen to make the NWT their home.

While the population of the region may be considered small by southern urban standards, together, all the peoples of the NWT are working to build a better future for their children. A big part of that future involves aboriginal land claim settlements. While progress has been made in this area not all the