

declarations from the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States are listed. Among the achievements is a declaration on international security. I have a number of questions about this declaration. We know that an agreement was signed between the Prime Minister and the President on the northern warning line, so that is understood, and certainly well known. However, I want to know if the declaration contains any new concepts or any new commitments.

● (1500)

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Which declaration?

Senator MacEachen: The declaration by the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States of America regarding international security.

Senator Roblin: Are you referring to the northern warning line?

Senator MacEachen: It is a three-page declaration in which reference is made to the modernization of the North American air defence surveillance and early warning system. It covers a very broad territory of international concepts with respect to defence and security.

I am asking whether there are any new commitments or obligations or concepts in this declaration that hitherto had not been accepted or elaborated upon by Canada, either in a bilateral way with the United States, or with our North Atlantic Treaty Organization partners.

Senator Roblin: I believe the answer is that there are no new concepts contained in that that had not already been on the table in one form or another during previous discussions with the United States. However, it is a complicated question and I think it would be unwise of me to give a categorical answer without first being sure that I am correct. I think that I am correct, but I will investigate the matter further.

Senator MacEachen: I thank the Leader of the Government for that assurance.

Earlier I listened to his answer to Senator Haidasz on the question of the strategic defence initiative in which the leader, as I recall, stated that Canada had not made any commitments with respect to it. I am not asserting that Canada has done so at this point, but there is a sentence which states:

We seek a stable world, with greatly reduced levels of nuclear arms. The prospect of an enhanced ability to deter war based upon an increasing contribution of non-nuclear defences against offensive nuclear arms has prompted the U.S. research effort embodied in the president's strategic defence initiative. We are agreed that this effort is prudent and is in conformity with the ABM Treaty.

I take it that the Leader of the Government would agree that the Prime Minister did endorse in this declaration the strategic defence initiative insofar as the research aspect of it is concerned.

Senator Roblin: I think he endorsed the idea that it was prudent to look into these matters as, indeed, have the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the leaders of a number of the NATO-member countries.

Senator MacEachen: I realize that. In fact, some of the wording in this particular declaration has been derived from the communiqué that was issued by Mrs. Thatcher when she endorsed the research aspect of the strategic defence initiative. I wanted to refine, in my own mind, at least, the answer given to Senator Haidasz about the strategic defence initiative, because Canada, through the Prime Minister, has stated that this is a good thing to do, but there is some difference of opinion on that point.

I have one more question which the Leader of the Government may want to take as notice. There is reference made to the necessity of continuing dialogue and consultation between Canada and the United States. Of course, that is fully endorsed by everybody, I am sure.

There is a further reference to the negotiations currently under way in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union. Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell me whether Canada was consulted with respect to the negotiating stance which is being put forward on behalf of the United States at the Geneva talks at present under way? Also, has Canada given any views of its own? Could he also say whether the United States is going into that conference with the same negotiating mandate with which it entered the broken-off negotiations with the Soviet Union, particularly on INF weapons.

Senator Roblin: I think that we must leave to the United States the right to establish its own negotiating position when it goes into negotiations of this kind. After all, that country is in charge of the nuclear umbrella, and we are, in a sense, the beneficiaries of that country having assumed that task. So, we have to allow it to clearly set its own priorities.

That is not to say that we do not have opinions on the subject, and that is not to say that we do not express them, because I am sure that we do.

If my honourable friend wants a more explicit statement from me, I will consult with my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to see what information can be provided.

Senator MacEachen: Honourable senators, I do seek further information, because, in the past the United States has consulted with its NATO allies about its negotiating stance, and Canada has taken advantage of that opportunity to put forward its own views. Therefore, I would like to know if that process has taken place on this occasion, and if Canada has endorsed the mandate, and whether it had certain views of its own which it would like to see included in the American position.

Senator Roblin: There is no doubt that this whole matter was on the table at Quebec City. As to what information I can obtain for my honourable friend which would contribute to the