

*Statements by Ministers*

**Mr. Frith:** I now want to get to the specifics of the Liberal Party's defence policy. It is very important to understand the three premises upon which that policy is based and maintained.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Is this Axworthy's policy?

**Mr. Frith:** The first is that defence policy should be part of a wider security policy. By that I mean defence policy must be cognizant of both our foreign policy needs. In other words, no decision should be made on defence policy which would detract from this nation's foreign policy goals.

As to Canada's long-term security, that will best be served by the pursuit of global security. That requires international co-operation. In pursuit of that, the Liberal Party remains committed to all of the multilateral institutions of the world, things like the United Nations. More importantly, we believe in our participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization so that we share with our partners in the defence of the western alliance. In addition, the Liberal Party, in pursuit of global security, recognizes that we have a responsibility to the defence of the North American continent and therefore believes very strongly in our participation in NORAD.

There are three primary functions that the military is being asked to undertake under a Liberal defence policy. I have already mentioned the first, a military contribution to the collective defence of the western alliance. There is one important proviso. We must maintain our participation in the defence of the western alliance but with the goal of always maintaining and enhancing stable deterrence. In other words, no defence or foreign policy initiative should be taken which would detract from stable deterrence in the western world.

The second is the protection of Canada's sovereignty through the effective control of Canadian territory to the extent that this is consistent with the wider goals of global security. In other words, when I talk about stable deterrence it is important that any acquisition of a weapon's system does not throw an unknown factor into the equation of stable deterrence. I submit to you, and I will go into some detail, that the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines will lead to destabilization.

Last but not least, something which I think all of us in this House will agree on, is the tremendous international reputation Canada has in peace-keeping operations throughout the world. We have contributed to international organizations in an attempt to limit the outbreak of conflicts in various parts of the world. Canada's track record from the days of Lester B. Pearson is something of which this nation can be very proud.

I admit that the Minister of National Defence, in his previous roles as Solicitor General and Minister of National Revenue, has a reputation of never making a mistake. However, I say to the House today that the Minister has made a mistake in his decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. In this case he is dead wrong and to the tune of \$7.5 billion.

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** At least.

**Mr. Frith:** Let me explain why the Liberal Party opposes the Conservative Government's decision to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines.

The rationale, at least as I gather it from the speech of the Minister, for the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines is to protect Canada's sovereignty and security in the Arctic. That is the basis of the Government's decision.

**Mr. Dick:** Wrong.

**Mr. Frith:** Let us separate the two issues because too often we confuse the sovereignty issue with the security issue. As a result Canadians become confused as to what exactly government policy is with respect to both.

• (1240)

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) has indicated that in his view, the issue of sovereignty in the Arctic is a legal issue which must be clarified by legal recourse, either through multilateral agreements or a redress to the World Court in The Hague. If the sovereignty issue is a legal issue, why are we applying a military solution to a legal problem?

The Government says that the only option available to Canadians to pursue the objectives of security and sovereignty are nuclear powered hunter-killer submarines. I reject the assertion that the only method of addressing the security issue in the Arctic is the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines and I will elaborate on that in a moment.

The Liberal Party has maintained that the pursuit of national security can only be successful if it is synonymous with the pursuit of international security. It has been a Canadian tradition never to attempt to enhance security through a unilateral, military measure. I view the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines as a unilateral, military approach to a sovereignty and security issue. I think there are better and more sane ways of approaching the problem.

It is our view that a combination of detection devices with increased air patrols and surface ships, such as the icebreaker and frigates, can provide a visible security presence in Canada's Arctic. I believe that in the long run a combination of conventionally powered submarines, frigates and air patrols will be a much more cost-effective way of dealing with the security problem which exists in the Arctic than the acquisition of 10 to 12 nuclear submarines.

I listened to the Minister indicate that in his opinion there is a growing threat of sea-launched and air-launched cruise missiles by the Soviet Union toward North America. Through questions which I have asked in the Standing Committee on National Defence I have learned that it is our best friend and ally, the United States, which has admitted to using our Arctic waters, not the Soviets. There is no proof yet that the Soviets have used their nuclear powered submarines under the Canadian ice cap.

However, let us assume that the Conservatives are correct, that there is an increased security threat as a result of sea-