

Supply

in my opinion, provide the assurance of verification which Canadians demand.

● (1710)

A few days ago I brought to the attention of this House the recent statement of the Aspen Institute International Group called *Managing East-West Conflict*. It does not promote dramatic win or lose situations. It is a sober, simple, long-range statement that addresses the tensions of the world and how to reduce them. Surely that is what this debate should be about. Reduce those tensions and the rest will follow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments? the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) rising on a question or a comment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: I must say I am very much impressed by the quality of the speech delivered by the new Chairman of the Committee for External Affairs and National Defence. This is a committee which is very dear to me, having been a member for 20 years and a chairman for eight years.

One of the questions I would like to ask my hon. colleague and new Chairman is this: Does he intend—not that I require a final answer today—but the Committee for External Affairs and National Defence has published a book that is most interesting for those who are concerned with disarmament and security. We worked for months, we heard witnesses from all parts of Canada, and also from abroad, including the Soviet Union—the Committee was keenly interested in Mr. Arbatov's evidence—and we made recommendations.

We did not have that much follow-up, because of all sorts of events, but I would like to ask the new Chairman of the Committee for External Affairs and National Defence whether he intends to follow up on the recommendations that were made directly to the Government, and especially to the foreign affairs commission—and, to give a concrete example, a follow-up on the United Nations' First and Second Conferences on Disarmament—to extract from the deliberations of that Conference the main resolutions and bring them back in order that there should be in fact not just a follow-up, but some concern on the part of Members of Parliament—I appreciate those matters are not of interest to all Hon. Members—but that we may have a follow-up because I am in total agreement with him.

Regardless of all our discussions today, Mr. Speaker, and apart from the fact that we are divided on the question of whether the previous administration should be blamed, or the policy changed, what is important is to get the two superpowers to sit down, irrespective of whatever may be done in this Parliament and in all other Parliaments in the world, if we cannot convince the two superpowers that, for the sake of world sanity, it is time that the two of them should get together, sit down, and discuss without preconditions.

What worries me is that President Reagan, our distinguished neighbour—because when we refer to the United States all the relevant qualifications must be added, our friends and so on and so forth; this is obvious, but still it must be said in case people have any doubts—however I am a bit frightened by the anti-Soviet rhetoric comparing the Soviet Union with the devil, with a monster, certainly does not help reduce world tensions. I am convinced of it. What we should try to do, and I do not want to take the Hon. Member by surprise by asking him a question without warning, even though I know that he already has an opinion on the matter, is to have the Committee on External Affairs and National Defence contribute to greater public awareness and understanding of the issue, first in Canada, and then world-wide, to bring the two super-powers to the negotiation table without imposing political preconditions.

This is indeed the wish of the International Parliamentary Union which I shall be presiding until tomorrow when a new chairman will be chosen. The International Parliamentary Union, to which we regularly send twice a year representatives of our various parties, has always supported for the past three years, that is since Budapest, Korea, Nigeria, Lagos, the Lagos Conference, the Seoul Conference, in South Korea, and the Budapest Conference, the wish of parliamentarians throughout the world that the two super-powers come to the negotiation table without imposing any preconditions. I wish every success to the new chairman of the Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, and I hope that we shall be able in this Committee to discuss the issues I have just mentioned. My only question, which is quite short, would be to ask him whether he intends to look at these many resolutions.

[*English*]

If I may put it the other way, perhaps the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence could look back at its final report to the House of Commons, including the minority views expressed by some Members, so that they could be implemented by the, if I may say, Hon. Members' committee.

Mr. Winegard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his good wishes. I hope I am slightly ahead of him in this matter. I have read the report, I have been in conversation with Ambassador Roche, and he has agreed to speak to the committee any time that we wish him to do so, and to review with us some of those recommendations and give us his good advice. I believe we will be doing that and, furthermore, if it is not part of the major foreign policy review, we will be doing it as a committee in any case.

Mr. Prud'homme: Thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to the Hon. Member before, so I am not taking him by surprise. Does he have any news to announce to the House? Would this great and important policy review on foreign affairs be made by a special committee of the House of Commons or by his own committee?