

Government Orders

Something happened a few years ago that changed my view in relation to the cruise missile. That was the gulf war. As a taxpayer, as an individual who cared a lot about what was happening at the time of the gulf war, for the first time I was able to see right in the opposition lobby something involving a cruise missile that did not involve nuclear or strategic nuclear warheads.

It was at that point that I began to look at the cruise missile a little differently. We are talking about roughly 288 cruise missiles that were used by the United States as part of what was called the allied effort in relation to the gulf war.

Having formed a view that the cruise missile was not necessarily part of the nuclear capability, I began to look at it more as something capable of carrying a payload. In the gulf war it had carried a conventional warhead for very specific tactical purposes.

My colleagues and I realize that it did kill. As I stand here I do not know what the body count was, but there were many killed and presumably many maimed by the Tomahawk cruise missiles used in the gulf war. It was not intentional but there still was death and the attendant destruction.

Is not the cruise missile simply an increasingly sophisticated product of research, development and delivery capability? What if the cruise missile simply carried a camera? What if technologically we got the cruise missile to go out and come back?

I know we can take pictures of the earth from satellites. We do not really need an unmanned capability all of the time, but what if there is cloud cover or what if we are talking about a volcano with all kinds of cloud cover? Perhaps the cruise missile could have the benefit of the doubt in being seen in a more benevolent or kinder content in great contrast with what it has been used as, a weapon of war.

In saying that I want to articulate my general acquiescence in the agreement that permits testing of the cruise missile in Canadian territory. I say that knowing the agreement permits the sharing of the test results with Canada. I am making an assumption, I hope not too naively, that the technology is known to the appropriate elements of our armed forces as a technology that they can work with.

• (2120)

There are three sensitivities that I have to put on the record and I am sure some of them, if not all, are shared by all my colleagues here.

First, I have listened intently to the remarks of our colleague, the member for Nunatsiak. I am very sensitive to the issue put that the testing of the cruise missile over northwestern Canada has to be subjected to the scrutiny of residents there. The long term residents there include the Dene and the Inuvialuit and if they have something to say to us through their members then we

have to listen. We must listen. There are elements of safety, environment and morality.

Second, this next item of sensitivity has been mentioned by the previous speaker and was articulated very well. It is that Canada must continue to make its contribution to global stability. It must continue to do its part in terms of ensuring our defence capability and our ability to be there at times when the world needs us as a country. We must participate in that. We must foster that.

I do not think we have been carrying our load internationally in that regard. There were times when we did not really want to when it was a cold war battle between two or three nuclear powers. Times have changed. We know that from time to time the world needs what our country has to offer in terms of global stability.

Third, we have a moral obligation to those who will follow us in this world to do everything possible on our end to remove the nuclear threat from the entire world.

I know there is an overlap here with the way we used to look at the cruise missile, but something tells me that the nuclear threat to this world does not relate so much any more to the cruise missile. It relates more to stockpiles and of previously built nuclear weapons and the potential nuclear weapon to be built that is in a steamer trunk somewhere in the world where it should not be. God only knows what might happen should we go down that road.

Those three sensitivities I leave on the record. In the end, having analysed this and attempting to articulate what I think are the views of my constituents in Scarborough—Rouge River, I am, along with other colleagues in the House who may feel this way, acquiescent and accepting that Canada should stay as part of the current cruise missile testing agreement with the United States.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, the previous member who represented this Waterloo riding was the Hon. Walter McLean who was preceded by Max Saltzman. In some ways I reflect some of their thinking and the thinking of the community that I represent.

We have to ask this question. When do we have enough armaments?

I heard the hon. member talk about an almost benevolent cruise missile, one which does not have to have nuclear capability.

• (2125)

If one looks at what initially instigated the development of the cruise missile, which was the Soviet Union, and if one looks at the Soviet Union today and its break up into many different states, one cannot help but think of Ukraine that has nuclear weapons and the world desperately wants it to give them up. In some sense I wonder how Canada as a nation that faces virtually no threat from Russia can tell the Ukrainians that they should