

Supply

our Ambassador for Disarmament, a former and distinguished colleague in this House, Mr. Douglas Roche, said at the United Nations last month, we recognize that:

Many Canadians believe that the present level of nuclear weapons endangers the continuation of life on the planet. But mere declarations of a freeze are not a meaningful response to this danger. Rather, we want immediate resumption of negotiations on reductions. Canada has said this many times. I want to repeat our demand: Canada wants the present dangerous levels reduced by immediate unconditional resumption of negotiations on reductions.

The Government's reasons for voting against the three nuclear arms freeze resolutions in the United Nations last month are well laid out in the explanation for the Canadian vote given by our Ambassador for Disarmament. Ambassador Roche pointed to the major flaws seen by the Government in the three resolutions in New York, and I shall not repeat them here. I would, however, like to address some further flaws in the resolutions we have before us. They are of two sorts: political and technical.

On the technical side, the resolution ignores the reality that a freeze raises the same, if not greater, problems of definition and verification as do reduction proposals. Developing an effective and verifiable freeze would not be a simple matter. It would involve long and complicated negotiations. The time and energies of both sides would be better spent negotiating reductions, and that is the call we hope to see emerge from next month's meeting between Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko. We want the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to do much better than a freeze.

There are many other flaws in the resolution and I will mention just one other. We do not agree that reliance on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence has heightened the risk of nuclear war, as asserted. On the contrary, one can only regret that the rest of the world to which the NDP has drawn attention has not been as successful in avoiding war over the past 35 years.

In political terms, adoption of the proposal would conflict directly with Canada's support for NATO's two-track decision which calls for the deployment in western Europe of INF missiles in the absence of concrete negotiated results obviating the need for such deployment, and with Canada's undertaking to permit the flight testing of unarmed Cruise missiles in Canada. It is probably not too much to say that it is these purposes which have given rise to the resolution. The House knows the position of the NDP on NATO and NORAD. It would have Canada withdraw from both. While sheltering under the United States' nuclear umbrella, they would have Canada go it alone.

There is a curious irony in a proposal which would attempt to influence NATO policy coming from a Party which would have Canada withdraw from that organization. The more so, because not only would the result be a loss of our military security, it would also remove us from the mainstream in the search for progress toward a more stable relationship between East and West, which is the other purpose of the alliance. The NDP position would remove Canada from all consultation and participation in the major arms control issues of today; strategic and INF nuclear arms control, the mutual balance force

reduction negotiations on conventional arms, and the Stockholm Conference.

There is another curiosity to be found in the NDP proposal. Members will have noted that the Soviet Union has been applauded for providing its views on a freeze to the U.N., which is no doubt a worthy act. The United States, on the other hand, has been singled out for not having complied so far with the U.N. resolution in question. On the question of the resumption of nuclear arms reduction negotiations, however, the NDP resolution is strangely silent when it comes to identifying which country walked out of the negotiations in the first place. It was the U.S.S.R. and not the United States of America. That choice of example tells us something.

Last week I attended the December meeting of NATO's Defence Ministers. I took the opportunity to say something about the totality of the Canadian defence effort and the direction the Government intends to take in the years ahead. Our objectives, which are to enable Canada to better contribute to and play its part in the common defence, were very well received by all my colleagues. It was also a great pleasure for me to join my alliance colleagues in reaffirming, by way of our communiqué, that:

NATO preserves the peace and security of its members through the maintenance of military forces sufficient for deterrence and defence and through the continuing attempt to develop a stable East-West relationship.

It is a statement that the framers of the motion before us should ponder. It is through solid work, not empty declarations, that progress will be made. I also told my colleagues that in the period ahead we must stay steadily on the course we have set for ourselves to ensure that effective deterrence is maintained, to increase our capacity for conventional defence, to modernize and to increase our forces' ability to survive and to respond to attack, and to ensure that our forces are demonstratively ready should they be attacked and will be able to fight if they are forced to fight.

Some examples of the improvements I identified are: increases in our land and air forces in Europe, full-scale exercise in 1986 of the Brigade Group which we have committed to the defence of northern Norway, and protection of our European airfields and troops by low level air defence. We are moving forward in Europe. As the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said in the House on February 9:

You can't have it both ways. You cannot echo support for NATO and consistently neglect support for our Armed Forces so that our alliance commitments cannot be honoured. Nor can we continue to flail at the nuclear umbrella and not be prepared to enhance the conventional deterrent.

● (1610)

A concrete example of what good relations with allies can achieve is to be found in the presence today in Canada of the United States briefing team on defence procurement. Secretary Weinberger and I have agreed to use the steering committee of the Defence Production Sharing Arrangement to monitor the work of the briefing team. The business community in Canada can be assured that Ministers take this initiative seriously. We will guarantee that their participation will be followed up.