

## **Excerpt from Debates of the Senate - Tuesday, May 9, 2000**

### **Speech by Senator Douglas Roche, O.C. on National Missile Defence System On the Order: Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Forrestall calling the attention of the Senate to the need for Canada to join the United States in National Missile Defence**

Hon. Douglas Roche: Honourable Senators, the government's plans to have cabinet examine the issue of Canada's participation in the national ballistic missile defence system, which is now being developed by the United States, escalates the importance of the debate on this subject. Senator Forrestall, whose high regard in the Senate has been earned by his many years of service in the two chambers of Canada's Parliament, made an important contribution. My own contribution, from a different perspective, centres on these main points: first, what the U.S. National Missile Defence program, known as NMD, would do, and the opposition publicly expressed by the closest allies of the U.S.; second, why NMD is a profound danger to international stability; and, third, why it would be a mistake of unprecedented proportions for Canada to take part in such a program.

First, the \$60-billion NMD system is intended to provide a defence of all 50 states in the United States against small-scale attack by intercontinental-range ballistic missiles. The primary argument made for immediate deployment is the possibility that emerging missile states hostile to the U.S., such as North Korea, might soon acquire ICBMs and use them to attack U.S. territory. The proposed NMD system would use ground-based interceptors deployed initially at one site and eventually at two sites, supported by an extensive network of ground-based radar and space-based infrared sensors. This system uses impressively advanced technology. Since tests have so far proved inconclusive as to whether the system will work, another test is scheduled shortly, after which President Clinton has said he will make a final decision whether to commit the U.S. to deployment.

However, it is precisely the deployment of such a system that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, ABM, signed by the U.S. and the former Soviet Union in 1972, was designed to stop. The ABM was designed to disallow the building of defensive systems in order to discourage the building of more offensive weapons to overcome these defences. The U.S. admits NMD contravenes the ABM treaty and is pressuring Russia to amend it or to abrogate it entirely.

Documents of the current U.S.-Russian negotiations were published in the New York Times on April 28. As the Union of Concerned Scientists explains in these documents, the United States asserts that Russia need not fear that the U.S. NMD system would undermine Russia's nuclear deterrent for two reasons. First, the U.S. argues that both countries "will possess, under any possible future arms reduction agreements, large diversified arsenals of strategic offensive weapons" and that both countries could deploy "more than 1,000 ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads over the next decade and thereafter" to give both countries "the certain ability to carry out an annihilating counterattack."

These documents, first obtained by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists demonstrate that to deploy its NMD system, the U.S. is willing to give up indefinitely the potential for cutting the Russian arsenal below about 1,000 missiles. If the U.S. is telling Russia that retaining a large arsenal for the indefinite future is its hedge against a U.S. NMD system, then the U.S. cannot credibly argue that it is also taking steps toward deep reductions or the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Yet, just last week, at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations, which I attended, Secretary of State Albright and other U.S. government officials sought to assure the rest of the world that the U.S. remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the NPT to pursue nuclear disarmament. These documents reveal just how empty those assurances are. To

say that the international community is in an uproar over U.S. intentions puts it mildly. There is consternation. The issue has not only split the U.S. from Russia but virtually isolated the U.S. in the world community. Even the nuclear partners and strongest allies of the U.S. are publicly trying to dissuade the U.S. from proceeding because of the irreparable harm it will do the nuclear disarmament agenda.

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, warned the U.S. that reduction programs will be jeopardized if the U.S. proceeds with NMD. The ABM treaty is a cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, he said, and cannot be tampered with. Whereas Ms Albright said there was no good reason why the ABM treaty could not be amended, Mr. Ivanov put it plainly by stating: Compliance with the ABM Treaty in its present form without any modifications is a prerequisite for further negotiations on nuclear disarmament. In his address at the UN, he made the same point several times. He said: Further reductions in strategic offensive weapons can only be considered in the context of preservation of the ABM Treaty.

In other words, if NMD goes ahead, it is goodbye nuclear disarmament. China is very wary of a Russia-U.S. deal on NMD. Ambassador Sha Zukang of China weighed in at the NPT review with an attack on any kind of ballistic missile defence system as "posing a severe threat to the global strategic balance and stability." He accused the U.S. of trying to seek absolute security for itself, an impossible task that is tantamount to a nuclear arms buildup. He warned that the international nuclear disarmament process would come tumbling down if the U.S. proceeds with NMD.

While more circumspect, the United Kingdom and France, nuclear allies of the U.S., both expressed similar concerns. Peter Hain, U.K. minister of state said: Active missile defence raises complex and difficult issues. We have made it clear - - to the U.S. and Russia - - that we continue to value the ABM and wish to see it preserved.

Ambassador Hubert de La Fortelle of France said his country was "anxious to avoid any challenges" to the ABM "liable to bring about a breakdown of strategic equilibrium and to restart the arms race." In addition, Javier Solana, former secretary general of NATO, speaking for the European Union, said NMD could actually "de-couple" the security link between the U.S. and its NATO allies, and this would indeed lead to chaos.

Honourable senators, the U.S. keeps saying it has to protect itself against "rogue" states and focuses on North Korea, Iraq and Iran, but there is no evidence that any of these states could manufacture a nuclear warhead. North Korea's missile program is primitive by world standards. Furthermore, the U.S. and North Korea are making progress in a cooperative program to eliminate the North Korean missile threat. An historic summit between North and South Korea is looming. Present trends indicate that North Korea's economy may collapse, democratizing trends in Iran could alter the direction of that country, and a post-Sadaam Iraq may well restore friendly relations with the West.

In short, the threat from other countries is diminishing; yet, the proponents of NMD claim an enemy is lurking, precisely because they must be able to depict an enemy somewhere in order to generate the support of U.S. taxpayers. Moreover, as the brilliant U.S. analyst Frances Fitzgerald points out in her new book, *Way Out There in the Blue*, NMD is the successor of the discredited strategic defence initiative of the 1980s known as Star Wars and is driven by the ideologically based extreme right in the U.S. that seeks an impossible unilateral security to the detriment of arms control and disarmament agreements of the past 30 years.

The motivation of this band of ideologues, which has captured control of the U.S. Congress, is to prepare the way for the U.S. military dominance of outer space. The spectre of a puny North Korea as the rationale for NMD is but a subterfuge for the real goal, which is the development of weapons in space and the preparation for space-directed wars of the 21st century. In all of this,

the profits for the military-industrial complex, already at historic highs because of the \$280-billion annual defence budget of the United States, will be spectacular.

Honourable senators, NMD is the trap now waiting to be sprung on Canada. As the U.S. geographic partner in North America, U.S.-Canada defence has been intertwined for decades. The NORAD agreement, developed during the Cold War to warn of Soviet missile attacks, is an expression of the structural relationship between the U.S. and Canada. The structural agreements of NORAD and NATO defence systems cannot be tampered with lightly. Nevertheless, a concerted campaign to intimidate Canada into supporting and joining the NMD has been launched. Its most vocal advocates are the pipsqueak colonels of the Pentagon, as former Prime Minister Trudeau once called them, who are conjuring up irrational fears among some Canadians that the U.S. will stop protecting Canada if our country does not join NMD.

Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy is being attacked because he said at the UN two weeks ago that "The proposed unilateral National Missile Defence would have serious implications for the NPT regime." As I have shown above, Mr. Axworthy was mild compared with what the rest of the world community is saying.

Honourable senators, in the late 1980s, when Canada was invited by the U.S. to join the Star Wars program, the same cheap threats were made that our country would suffer if we declined. After careful consideration, the Canadian government of the day said no. What happened? Nothing, except that the North American Free Trade Agreement and other economic benefits to Canada went ahead. If Canada could say no to missile defence madness in the Cold War, why can we not - politely, of course, as befits our role in international diplomacy - say no in the post-Cold War era?

Speaking of diplomacy, one of Canada's greatest military diplomats, Tommy Burns, who led our country in arms control negotiations, would be turning over in his grave at the idea of Canada becoming the laughingstock of the world in giving up our cherished ability to contribute to the building of peace by joining in such an ill-considered venture. So would other great Canadian internationalists, such as Lester Pearson, John Humphrey, Hugh Keenleyside, Saul Rae and King Gordon.

The time has come - and many, many Canadians are watching Ottawa carefully to see how we will come down on this matter - for the Government of Canada to state that the foremost priority for Canada is to build the body of international law represented by the UN system, not succumb to the militarists in the U.S. who want nothing better than to trumpet to the world that the highly-respected Canada has bought into NMD. Canada must not allow itself to be hoodwinked by being drawn into a matter that is being driven by U.S. domestic politics.

If Canada were to join NMD, it would have catastrophic consequences for our ability to continue arguing for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the moment, Canada is playing a major role to ensure that the Non-Proliferation Treaty -- the review of which is ongoing in New York - remains intact as a bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons. That is where Canada's efforts must remain focused.

Finally, the answer to future threats of ballistic missiles is to preserve and strengthen the existing web of military, political, economic and legal measures designed to prohibit, impede, isolate, expose and respond to the activities of potentially hostile state and non-state actors. The alternative to NMD does exist. It is the maintenance of international legal norms backed up by properly funded verification regimes, arms control, economic incentives, cooperative programs and export control systems. This approach builds the conditions for peace. Canada must go forward to peace, not backward to war.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!