House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

FAAE • NUMBER 014 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, December 6, 2004

Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Monday, December 6, 2004

● (1540)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)): Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are continuing our study on disarmament issues.

We have the pleasure of having as witnesses today Ambassador Jonathan Dean, who is an adviser on international security issues from the Union of Concerned Scientists. Welcome, Ambassador Dean.

We also have Mr. Baker Spring, who is a research fellow in nationalsecurity policy for the Heritage Foundation. They are both from Washington, D.C.

Welcome, both of you.

If you have a communication to give us, we'll start with Mr. Spring, please.

Mr. Baker Spring (Research Fellow in National Security, Heritage Foundation): Mr. Chairman, it's an honour for me to have the opportunity to testify before this distinguished standing committee on the ongoing developments in the area of ballistic missile defence. I say this primarily for the reason that I believe the alliance between the United States and Canada is the most important security relationship the United States has with any foreign country, period.

The existence of the stable and peaceful border with Canada, bolstered by the alliance relationship, helps to make possible the broad internationalist foreign policy the United States has been pursuing since before World War II. If the United States faced an unpredictable border situation to its north and a contentious relationship with Canada, the consensus in the United States in favour of an internationalist foreign policy, in my view, would break down very quickly. Many Americans, I am afraid, have become so accustomed to this happy circumstance that they may take its blessings for granted. In part, this results from the natural tendency to focus on what is contentious or problematic.

Thus, I would like to thank the Canadian people for their positive relationship with the United States. That relationship is an irreplaceable part of the overall security posture of the United States, and it provides tremendous benefits to the people of the United States. I would also argue that it provides similar benefits to the people of Canada; but it is better left to the people of Canada to assess those benefits for themselves.

The centrality of the security relationship between United States and Canada carries over directly to the issue of missile defence. This is because of the essential supporting role that the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, can and will play in providing an effective missile defence for the people of both countries. The emerging role of NORAD in missile defence is best described by briefly reviewing the significant changes that have taken place in recent years regarding the U.S. government's policy in the area of missile defence.

For almost 30 years, the U.S. government has maintained a strategic military posture that left the entire area of North America vulnerable to ballistic missile attack. However, this posture of vulnerability to missile attack is about to end, because President George W. Bush will soon declare operational ballistic missile defence for the American people, as well as for the friends and allies of the United States around the world. This earlier posture was a direct result of a policy that defined vulnerability to ballistic missile attack as a virtue. The policy of vulnerability was codified in the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with the former Soviet Union.

The process of ending the policy of vulnerability began in 1983, when President Ronald Reagan announced the establishment of the strategic defence initiative, SDI. Until 1993 the U.S. Department of Defense pursued a research and development effort that produced a number of technological options for missile defence. President Bill Clinton, however, chose to restore the policy of vulnerability at that time. In 1999 the U.S. government reversed ground again and jettisoned the policy of vulnerability. The United States Congress took this action when it enacted the National Missile Defense Act of that year. The act required the deployment of a missile defence system as soon as technological advancements would permit it.

President Bush confirmed his support for missile defence in a speech on the topic at the National Defence University in Washington on May 1, 2001. He then set about the task of executing the previously enacted National Missile Defence Act. The terrorist attack suffered by the American people on September 11, 2001, confirmed the wisdom of President Bush's approach by demonstrating that a posture of vulnerability to attack was inappropriate in the post-Cold War world. On December 13, 2001, President Bush announced the intention of the United States government to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. The withdrawal decision took effect the following June. In December 2002, President Bush announced his intention to declare a missile defence capability operational by the end of this year. Interceptors have been put in place in Alaska in recent weeks, and the declaration of an operational capability could come at any time.

The impending announcement of an operational missile defence capability caused the U.S. and Canada to consider an amendment to the NORAD agreement. On August 5, the United States and Canada exchanged notes amending the agreement between the two nations that governs NORAD. The amendment will allow NORAD to support missile defence operations; this was a wise decision. The amendment will strengthen the existing NORAD structure by making it more relevant to today's military requirements.

Missiles in the hands of rogue states and terrorist organizations pose an intolerable risk to the security of both United States and Canada. The Bush administration, as I described earlier, has been working to construct a capability to defend the territory of the United States and its friends and allies against such threats. Given the requirements for defending the territory of the United States, this capability will necessarily provide considerable protection to Canada. A system capable of defending Seattle against a North Korean missile launch, for example, will provide significant protection to Vancouver.

● (1545)

This is where NORAD becomes relevant. Since 1958, the United States and Canada have used NORAD pursuant to a joint agreement for the aerospace defence of North America; specifically, NORAD detects the launches of missiles and the flights of aircraft in order to warn both governments of attacks. NORAD has allowed the United States and Canada to pool their assets and make joint assessments about air and missile attacks. These assessments then allow both countries to take the necessary steps to ensure their security.

Supporting missile defence operations, however, has not been a responsibility of NORAD, because neither the United States nor Canada has possessed missile defence systems for decades. NORAD's responsibilities regarding missile attacks were exclusively in the area of early warning. As I noted earlier, this is changing; the United States could announce an operational capability for missile defence at any time, with interceptors now in place in Alaska.

Under existing circumstances, NORAD support is necessary to make a missile defence system effective. If the August change in the NORAD agreement had not been concluded and NORAD had not been allowed to perform these necessary functions, it is likely that the U.S. would have assigned these functions to entities outside NORAD. Not only would the alternative have been needlessly expensive, but it would also have weakened NORAD. It also would have called into question the basic alliance commitment between the United States and Canada, which requires each to come to the defence of the other in the event of an attack.

Canada's direct involvement in NORAD support operations for missile defence, therefore, makes it an important ally for missile defence. With the August 5 agreement, Canada has stepped up to its responsibilities in providing for the common defence of North America. All Americans should be grateful to Canada for taking this step, because it materially improves their security. Canadians should be grateful to their government as well; the August 5 agreement will pave the way for a policy that will allow the American-built missile defence system to provide considerable protection to the Canadian people. In this regard, Canada entered into the amendment of the NORAD agreement to allow for the support of missile defence operations without prejudice to a possible future agreement for direct cooperation in missile defence programs. Such an agreement is the logical next step.

Canadians should understand that there are many options available to them for broader missile defence cooperation with the United States. For example, Australia, Denmark—or Greenland—Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, and Russia all have missile defence cooperation programs with the U.S. Each of these programs has involved different modes of cooperation, as well as different scopes of participation. What they have in common, other than the focus on missile defence, is an approach that helps each country to defend itself. They do not involve an insistence by the U.S. that an ally or friend field the defence it does not want. Accordingly, the U.S. government is not wedded to any particular mode or scope of U.S.-Canadian missile defence cooperation at this time. It is prepared to work directly with the Canadian government to establish an approach that is beneficial to both sides and that accounts for Canadian strengths and limitations in this field.

The flexibility, however, is a two-way street. Canada should not see missile defence cooperation as a means to obtain a veto over the ability of the U.S. to defend itself. Any attempt to deny the U.S. the ability to defend itself, I believe, will be seen in the U.S. as contrary to both the fundamental U.S.-Canadian alliance relationship and the amended NORAD agreement. In fact, it would be difficult to argue otherwise. Further, this view would not be limited to the Bush administration. Polls have consistently shown that there's popular support for missile defence in the U.S. In part, this popular support is explained by the fact of the experience of the attack of September 11, 2001, which has convinced the American people that vulnerability is an untenable policy in the post-Cold War world.

Mr. Chairman, NORAD has been at the heart of the United States-Canadian alliance since 1958; this is because it has been an adaptable institution. The experience of September 11, 2001, has changed global security requirements in fundamental ways, including a much greater reliance on defensive operations. The August 5 amendment sends a powerful signal that the alliance is healthy and that NORAD will continue to be highly relevant in providing for the common defence of North America. A follow-on agreement for broader cooperation between the United States and Canada in the field of missile defence will only add to the strength of this key security relationship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. I'll be happy to address any questions you or other members of your committee have for me regarding missile defence.

Thank you.

● (1550)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Spring.

Now we'll go to Ambassador Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean (Adviser on International Security Issues, Union of Concerned Scientists): Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, members of the standing committee, I, too, would like to express my sincere thanks for being invited to talk with you today. In my remarks, I hope to provide useful background information for decisions that Canada alone can make and that will have great importance for its own future and for the future of the world.

Today, nearly sixty years after the United States dropped nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world remains dominated by nuclear weapons. It is also dominated even more by efforts to deal with the possible consequences of nuclear weapons, such as missile delivery of nuclear warheads, instead of dealing with the weapons themselves.

The United States is again taking this course. At present, it is trying to cope, by means of missile defence, with the possibility of attack by long-range ballistic nuclear-armed missiles. As part of this effort, it is beginning to move into the last weapon-free environment of our planet, outer space. This is a fateful action. It means that in this last weapon-free environment, we are beginning again the deadly, escalating game of weapons competition and the discouraging game of catch-up palliative arms control.

The process is beginning with deploying mid-course interceptors, which will have questionable effectiveness against ballistic missiles but will be good enough to serve as weapons against satellites in fixed orbit and to trigger a destabilizing international ASAT competition in anti-satellite weapons. Unavoidably, this process will end with space wars and with nuclear holocaust. In reaction to the United States' moves, Russia has already announced a new manoeuvrable missile capable of evading missile defences.

Fortunately, we have time to carefully think through the crucial decision on whether or not to deploy weapons in outer space. Fortunately, we also have better means to deal with the dangers that space weapons are intended to counter. We have time because the present danger of long-range missile attack on North America is very limited. North Korea, the only plausible source of long-range missile attack, does not have an effective long-range missile or a nuclear warhead. It has suspended missile testing. Moreover, North Korean leaders are quite rational in pursuit of their aims, and deterrence still works with them, as it does with China.

The cheapest, most effective route to deal with the possibility of long-range ballistic missile attack on North America is to reach an agreement with North Korea to eliminate both its nuclear and missile programs. The North Korean regime has put these on the negotiating table. The United States and its four negotiating partners have the resources to come to a verifiable, negotiated outcome with North Korea.

In Iran, too, the developments are favourable. The EU partners have achieved Iran's agreement to temporary suspension of uranium enrichment. The chances are that they will, in the long run, develop a mix of trade development and security measures that will bring an enduring solution.

As for outer space, several steps could be taken by space-faring nations, in place of weaponization, to protect their valuable intelligence navigation and communications satellites—steps in which the United States could logically participate to its advantage, steps whose promotion by other space-faring governments should not be a source of friction with the United States government even if it decides not to participate in some of them.

One of these actions would be to expand and formalize the concept of non-interference with national means of verification. This concept first appeared in the SALT I treaty of 1972, and it has been applied to several treaties since, including the multilateral Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. This measure prohibits interference with space-mounted sensors for early warning and imaging. This concept could be extended to cover non-interference —including no use of force against all unarmed satellites of all states —in the form of a General Assembly resolution, possibly followed by a treaty with the same content.

● (1555)

A non-interference agreement of this kind should include penalty clauses for non-compliance. Even if it does not, its existence would mean that in the event of non-compliance, corrective action could be taken in the International Court of Justice or the Security Council, with possible sanctions and, at the end of the road, coercive use of force decided by the Security Council.

Another partial step to protect space assets is for as many space-faring countries as possible to issue individual declarations that they would not be the first to deploy weapons in space and that they would collaborate with others to develop effective verification of this commitment. The thought behind this proposal is that if space-faring countries—and these include Russia, China, France, the European Union, India, Japan, the United States, and Canada, too—made such declarations, such action would counter the most frequent rationale for deployment of weapons in space: that space weapons are necessary in order to protect space assets from the weapons of other countries.

Russia has taken the lead and made a declaration like this in the First Committee this September. Canada has approved the Russian declaration but has not yet made a declaration of its own. If several countries issued these not-to-be-the-first declarations, these parallel actions could also provide the nucleus for an international treaty negotiation to prohibit weaponization of space.

A third possible action would be a code of conduct for a prevention of incidents and dangerous military practices in space that could threaten existing space assets. The most recent effort has been put forward by the Henry L. Stimson Center of Washington. The key activities covered by the Stimson Center proposal are avoiding collisions and simulated attacks; creating special safety areas around satellites; safer traffic management procedures; prohibiting tests in space of anti-satellite weapons; providing reassurance through information exchange, transparency, and notification measures; and adopting more stringent debris measures. This code of conduct could readily be adopted as a resolution by the General Assembly or developed into a treaty.

As the United States moves closer to deploying boost-phase weapons in space as part of its missile defence program—and that is the reason I'm addressing, Mr. Chairman, these measures to protect space assets other than boost-phase weapons and other weapons like the near field infrared experiment, now scheduled for deployment in space in the late summer of 2006, only twenty months from now, and the projected test bed for kinetic energy weapons, now scheduled for deployment in space in 2010—a further action that might be taken is for another party to the Outer Space Treaty, like Canada, to request consultation under article IX of the treaty, which reads in part:

> If a State Party to the Treaty has reason to believe that an activity or experiment planned by it or its nationals in outer space...would cause potentially harmful interference with activities...in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space...[it] may request consultation concerning the activity or experiment.

Any party to this treaty can request such consultation as a matter of right. The consultation need not be confrontational. Several countries could join in requesting it. A consultation of this kind, raising questions about budgeting and tests for the NFIRE project—some versions of which include a kinetic kill vehicle—would be a warning signal for the United States that it would face serious international complications if it persists with a weapons deployment project. These complications could include action for liability damages, a request to the International Court of Justice for an injunction against continuation of the deployment, and a good deal of adverse publicity.

● (1600)

It is important that Canada has now publicly joined Russia and China in raising, at this year's General Assembly, the issue of a treaty against the weaponization of space. It would be desirable for the governments of China, Russia, Canada, and perhaps others now to proceed to develop a model treaty to illustrate what a possible treaty might look like. This action, which could and should be taken separately from a decision to press for a negotiation of the treaty draft, would have the advantage of showing the United States and other governments what would be involved with a treaty against weaponization, and of providing a rallying point for world opinion on the issue of weaponization of space.

Mr. Chairman, there are no commanding heights in space that, once seized, can assure enduring domination over it. The missile defence program of the present administration of the United States leads to the weaponization of space. However, the United States is not safer today for having initiated the development of the ultimate weapon sixty years ago. Instead, its government and people worry day and night that this weapon may come back at them and against others. This same fate will attend the possible weaponization of space. That is why it is in the interest of all nations to avoid that weaponization.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ambassador Dean.

We'll proceed to the question and answer period, and for the benefit of our witnesses, we start with the opposition in this committee.

We'll start with Mr. Kevin Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I welcome you both to our committee. Thank you for coming and giving your expertise to the topic that we are discussing.

Over the last two and a half months, we have tried to get to the bottom of a number of questions. Obviously, somewhere on the legislative agenda sits this whole question of BMD, ballistic missile defence. The government has come forward and said they are open to this and that they are moving toward this.

In our party, we want some questions answered. Still, although we have had a number of witnesses here, I can't say a lot of the questions really have been answered. We've heard from those who are on one side who have said any movement toward anything is wrong. Others have said we need to make sure everything we do is for the security of our continent and we need to jump in and do whatever we're asked to do by other countries.

Regardless of what you might think of BMD, what is your perspective of threat? I sit on another committee where we learn about the terrorist threats, the potential at ports, the potential at some of our harbours to bring in a dirty bomb, to have the wrong types of people come into our country. I sat on the justice committee when we went through Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism legislation. We heard about many different methodologies that terrorists may use to attack a country. This is perhaps terrorist-related, with some type of missile; but maybe it's not terrorists, maybe this is for some war down the road that we are yet to learn about and that will come from a country—maybe a rogue nation, as far as terrorism is concerned. So what is your perception of threat?

Also, if Canada were to sign on to BMD, what would it cost Canada? I don't want to hear the argument of what it would cost Canada in trade if we didn't sign on, but what are we going to be asked to do? Are we going to be asked to put hundreds of millions of dollars into something? Are we going to be asked to turn the north of Canada into silos with these anti-ballistic missiles? What are we going to be asked to do?

Those are my main two questions, and hopefully I'll get another round.

● (1605)

The Chair: Your time is up.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Okay. Hopefully I'll get another round.

The Chair: Ambassador Dean first, and then Mr. Spring.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Well, I find that's the key question on the perspective of threat that one might have on this general issue. Five countries have long-range nuclear missiles—China, Britain, France, the U.K., and Russia—as well as the United States. They are considered by our administration and by most people as being deterred from the use of those missiles by the fact that the United States could retaliate, so we can cross them out. I think that deterrent also works for North Korea.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Are you saying that we should cross Russia out when in the last two months they have come forward saying that they now have a new nuclear program that will be state of the art and undetectable by some? When Doug Roche came here, he said that Putin said his country would soon deploy new nuclear missile systems that would surpass those of any nuclear power.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: He said that.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: That sounds to me as if we shouldn't be saying that we can cross them out.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: That's a good point. He said that in February. He said this would be a manoeuvrable missile that could actually penetrate a missile defence, and that's what his chief of staff also said. I think it's a reaction to the United States missile defence, which makes the Russians nervous about the quality of their deterrent and, of course, is having a similar effect on China. In the long run, it's driving up the size of the arsenals.

You asked about the threat, what the threat is now. Despite the development of this new weapon, it is Russia's idea of an equalizer when it's up against the United States, which has not only five times its nuclear strength in terms of the quality of weapons but also a missile defence system. That's its answer, but it's deterred, and in my opinion, so is North Korea. I don't consider Iran to be a threat to the United States in missile terms.

At the moment, I don't believe there is an acute missile threat. It's why I suggested in my statement that we have time to deal with this problem by other means, through negotiation. That would be my answer.

● (1610)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Do you have—

The Chair: I'm sorry.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Can I ask him if he has an answer to the other question on the costs?

The Chair: Yes. We'll go to the first question for Mr. Spring, and we'll come back for the second question with both our guests.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Yes. Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. Spring, please.

Mr. Baker Spring: Obviously, this question with regard to threat is very important and also admittedly problematic. It's one of the reasons the United States government has decided to adopt what it calls the capabilities-based approach. Who in the United States would have thought we were at significant risk of a threat from civilian air liners used essentially as cruise missiles? Nobody did. As a result, the United States policy is to not specifically marry the traditional elements that went into threat assessment, both capabilities and intentions, particularly because the latter is so hard to determine. The policy of government in Russia could change very quickly. In China, it could change very quickly.

The intention element of the threat assessment is particularly difficult. For its part, the United States is going to look at what the capabilities are and try to fashion the best military posture that it can, which in my judgment is a mix of offensive and defensive forces because it provides flexibility in order to address these things.

As it relates to cost, the United States is looking at a variety of means of cooperation in missile defence with a variety of countries, suited to their needs, desires, and abilities. My judgment is that because of the particularly important geographical relationship between the United States and Canada, I would say that Canada's most important responsibility in terms of this cooperation is to not try to exercise some type of veto over the ability of the United States to defend itself.

As it relates to monetary costs, for example, Greenland is allowing the upgrade of an early warning radar on its territory. Nobody is asking Greenland for a huge amount of money. They don't have the capability to provide that. In fact, I think Greenland is probably getting a net economic benefit from that work.

I think what will happen is that the United States, the Department of Defense in particular, is going to look for modes of cooperation that are best suited to our friends and allies wanting to participate in this global missile defence capability.

The Chair: Second question, Ambassador Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Sir, by costs do you mean what are the consequences or do you mean the economic cost?

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I mean the economic cost. We in our committee have the ability to try to sit back and determine trade, the consequences either one way or the other.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Fine.

At the moment, the economic costs during the time this project has run, since it started in the 1970s, total about $200 billion. At the moment it is running at a rate of $10 billion a year. The costs of some of the equipment that are projected for the longer range, for example, the space-based laser, which has been postponed but which nevertheless is there as a follow-on for the airborne laser, is.... I can take you through the figures. It takes $22,000 per kilo in costs to lift items into orbit. If we're talking about two laser interceptors each for five ICBMs pointed at North America, then we're talking about ten interceptors at about 1,000 tonnes of laser fuel apiece. At $22 million per tonne, it gives you a figure of $220 billion for this project, a partial laser defence against missiles from North Korea. This is only a segment of the future.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Can I ask something on that?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Do you think Canada may be asked to bear a large brunt of the costs? You've named the costs that the United States has in the ballistic missile defence, but is there going to be a large cost, where we would have to budget in our defence budget, that would go towards the ballistic missile defence system? Or do you think the United States will take, as Mr. Spring has suggested, a majority...they'd recognize our abilities and our inabilities, in some cases, to be involved in certain areas and would say, "All we want maybe is the ability to do this in your air space" or "We may want the land to put a couple of silos"? We don't know what's involved with that.

● (1615)

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: I don't think I can answer your question accurately, but I think that is in part because there is no realization in the United States of what the costs of this project are going to be. If, as I expect, it causes real difficulty with Russia and with China and causes us ultimately to have to increase the size of our own nuclear arsenal to keep up with them as well as with our missile defence, then the costs will be of the kind I just mentioned, astronomical, and they will also be felt in the economic and financial world, where China, for example, is financing our deficit through investment in the United States.

The Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr. Spring.

Mr. Baker Spring: I'll just make one quick comment as it relates to coming back to the threat question. My colleague here has alluded to deterrence being effective as the solution to these emerging threats with regard to countries like North Korea or Iran, with continued progress in its missile program. I know there are many that are interested in the issue of nuclear disarmament. I'm not one who favours an immediate step towards U.S. nuclear disarmament, but if deterrence is the essential answer to that question, then I think you have to give up on the idea that there is going to be a prospect for comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you.

I will continue along the same lines as Mr. Spring, by quoting from Mr. Dean's text, which states:

> It means that in this last weapon-free environment, we are beginning again the deadly, escalating game of weapons competition—

He refers to space as outer space.

Is not the most significant cost of this missile defence shield project—it is, in fact, still just a project—the renewal of the arms race, the signs of which are already apparent?

History has shown us that the Soviet Union and the United States had almost exhausted their resources before signing the 1972 treaty. Is it not extremely dangerous to free this demon or, to use the same expression, to allow the renewal of this "deadly, escalating game of weapons competition"?

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Spring.

Mr. Baker Spring: Let me address that on two levels, first as it relates to the so-called weaponization of space. Long-range ballistic missiles, nuclear armed, spend about 90% of their flight time in space. Space is also militarized in the sense that we have a wide variety of sensor and other satellites that support that infrastructure. My judgment is that if you are looking to make space a weapons-free environment, you're going to have to take steps back, because it is in fact a heavily militarized, heavily weaponized place now—not all of it, of course. Space is a large place. It's a piece of geographic territory, and some parts of space are more important than other parts. As a result, I tend to think that the best analogy for security policy, as we look at space, is the way the United States Navy, for example, treats the high seas. The United States Navy supports the freedom of navigation, the freedom of trade, the freedom to use the resources of the sea appropriately. I think, as a geographic area, there's much in common there.

As it relates to the ABM Treaty, which of course is no longer in force, to say that was an effective tool for offensive nuclear disarmament I think misreads the history. The United States and the Soviet Union, from 1972 until the collapse of the Soviet Union, increased their offensive strategic nuclear arsenals essentially fourfold in terms of the numbers of deliverable warheads. Interestingly enough, since the ABM Treaty has gone away, the U. S. and Russia have entered into an agreement that will bring that number back down to somewhere between 1,700 and 2,200 deliverable warheads.

So I just don't think there's been a causal connection between the ABM Treaty being in force and offensive nuclear arms limitations on the other hand.

● (1620)

The Chair: Mr. Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Thank you, sir.

The weaponization of space, I believe, will be competitive from the outset. Most of us accept the existence of the 600-plus satellites that now are orbiting this planet and we wish to preserve them. That is why I suggested various measures other than weaponization to protect these satellites. As soon as we start weaponization, perhaps beginning with anti-satellite weapons in which the interceptors that we've put in position now in our missile defence system can function as anti-satellite weapons, other countries will begin anti-satellite weapons. Then they will begin other methods of dealing with our problem: jamming, other acts of making the use of space more difficult perhaps, sending a load of rocks and pebbles into the path of satellites, and a whole variety of other things.

The United States has a huge lead in satellites. We have two-thirds of those now operating, but it will jeopardize that lead and open the door to very dangerous competition that, as soon as satellite communication is injured on a wide scale, will very probably lead directly to nuclear warfare by the other countries involved.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Lalonde, you may ask a brief supplementary question.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I do not know if Mr. Spring will agree, but I want to know what you believe is the best—and, of necessity, multilateral—way to start or continue an anti-nuclear or nuclear disarmament movement, with regard to this proposed missile defence shield.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Ambassador.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Colleagues, it's better for you to address that one.

● (1625)

The Chair: I think so.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: There are quite a large number of things that can be done now.

I think one of the first and most important things that could be done is for Canada, which has already approved this idea in the First Committee—the Prime Minister spoke of this—to move towards a treaty on outer space that eliminates all weapons from outer space and not merely weapons of mass destruction, as is now the case under the 1967 treaty.

Among the other things we could do and should do now is to come to some solution about how to deal with enrichment of uranium, which can be carried out secretly and which Dr. El Baradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency has suggested should be placed under international control. There should be moves in that direction. I think moves in that direction will lead to another project, which the United States, Canada, and other countries have promoted over the years, and that is a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons. We cannot have any nuclear disarmament unless fissile material is no longer produced and unless warheads withdrawn from deployment are also destroyed under international supervision. That's one reason why the Moscow treaty, which Baker Spring referred to, was considered by many to be not very satisfactory, because there was no provision in it for destruction of the withdrawn warheads, which could be stored indefinitely.

That's only a part of the things that could be done. We could even start by negotiating a settlement with North Korea, which is ready to be rescued from its misery by the other negotiating partners, and get rid of the only threat that has any plausibility whatever of long-range missile attack on North America.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Ms. Phinney, please.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): I can see by the questions that it doesn't matter which side of the House you're sitting on or which party you're in, we all seem to have questions.

What seems to be going around now is that possibly the Prime Minister is willing to accept this if there's no weaponization of space and if it doesn't cost us anything. That's what seems to be floating around, or that's the condition under which we're going to go into this.

Is it even feasible that there would be something we could do with no cost to us? Is it possible that the whole thing on the American side could exist without weaponization of space? Is that just pie in the sky?

Mr. Baker Spring: Those are two different questions. Let me answer them in turn.

I would hope there wouldn't be a case of no cost, because I think an alliance relationship is properly balanced in the sharing of costs. For example, I don't know what percentage of NORAD's costs are borne financially by Canada—I wasn't able to find that number—but I suspect it's not anywhere near fifty-fifty. But I also don't want to feed an idea, regarding America's friends and allies around the world, that everybody can take what I would describe as a freeloader position—that is, obtain the protections associated with a defence or military posture and assume no risks and no costs, just assuming the United States will always be there. To me that's not a balanced alliance relationship or a friendship relationship. Again, I think the United States, as it relates to missile defence cooperation, is going to look at the specific abilities and contributions that would be appropriate for those countries.

As it relates to the weaponization or militarization of space, I think if again you get to the point where the United States government—and that includes the Congress—says, what you're really asking from us is the inability to defend ourselves, then I think that's going to be rejected. If that's the price of cooperation, then the United States would go without it if it had to, not because it wants to. But what's the purpose? If the purpose of a defensive alliance is to defend, but one side is entering into it in effect to establish a veto over one of the other parties' ability to defend himself, I don't see what would be the appropriate bargain in that case.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I'd like Mr. Dean to answer that as well, but could I ask another one first?

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Phinney.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Let's say—and I haven't any idea of this, although I should know—we're paying 10% of what the Americans are paying for NORAD. Would you think it realistic if we were to sign on for 10% of whatever this other project comes to? Would that mean billions of dollars?

● (1630)

Mr. Baker Spring: I don't think it does have to be a specific percentage. As I alluded to earlier, there can be various forms of cooperation.

You have to remember that this is the global missile defence capability. This isn't just for the defence of North America that the United States is pursuing this policy. Ballistic missiles at this particular point in time, in my judgment, are the weapons of choice for these rogue states. Even with the sanctioned Iraqi regime, of the various weapons that were prohibited in the post-Gulf War resolutions by the United Nations, the one they violated most vociferously was in the ballistic missile area, in the case of Iraq. Our form of cooperation with Kuwait was to allow the ballistic missile defence system, in the form of the Patriot, to be deployed with U.S. forces going to the region.

In some cases, it will be purely operational cooperation. For example, in operational cooperation, along with NORAD, the Australians are very interested in potentially allowing the use of satellite downlinking for early warning. In other cases, you have the medium extended-range air defence, where there is joint technological development, as there is with the Japanese in sea-based systems.

So there's a very wide variety of forms of cooperation. I don't think it's going to come down to a particular percentage or a particular mode of cooperation or a particular scope. All of those are subject to whatever discussions the Canadian and U.S. governments want to have.

I share your frustration, because what we're doing here is we're speculating about what form a follow-on agreement to the NORAD amendment might look like without seeing it in concrete terms. All of us are at a little bit of a loss to describe what it might be. The flip side, though, is that all of the options are open.

Ms. Beth Phinney: My real questions were going to be about the NORAD agreement of three or four months ago. I haven't gotten to that yet.

Perhaps Mr. Dean could give just a short answer.

The Chair: Mr. Dean, do you have any comments?

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Yes, Mr. Chair.

It's feasible to have a missile defence system without a space component. I don't believe it would be effective in either event, in the objective sense, in blocking incoming missiles. On the other hand, the administration has made these space-based components an important part of this present program. Another strain of administration thought, which wishes to have unquestioned military superiority throughout the world, also is highly interested in space for that reason, as is the U.S. Air Force, which issues instructions on this subject.

So I don't think there's a great deal of prospect, as Mr. Spring was in other words saying, in buying just part of this program.

The Chair: We'll go now to Ms. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much to our witnesses this afternoon.

I first want to express my appreciation, and I think a lot of Canadians would feel the same way, for the respect that Ambassador Dean accorded Canadians in his opening comment, that a decision about Canadian participation in missile defence is a decision that Canada alone can make. At the same time, it's much appreciated that on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a highly respected body, you are sharing their views, and your experience.

I have to say that your open letter to the Prime Minister today was very helpful in setting out the elements of what we're dealing with; in putting forward some of the evidence that indicates that in fact Bush's missile defence would not really provide protection against long-range ballistic attacks, in any case; and in elaborating on the impact, unfortunately the negative impact, on international relations and the manner in which it would clearly, in your view, undermine the cooperative approach to security, which actually is the only protection we've had in many decades from destroying the planet, really.

What I want to pursue just a little bit—and I appreciated hearing you speak at noon on this issue at the Press Club—is the whole question about what we have now in terms of satellites in space, and what are the implications of proceeding with this. Perhaps I could briefly twin the second question and direct it, by way of follow-up, to Mr. Spring.

I have to say, I was just stunned by your quite matter-of-fact statement—I guess unvarnished, and we should welcome it—that effectively space is now already weaponized, and that, really, it's heavily militarized. It's kind of like, “What's your problem?”

The reason I'd like to hear both of our witnesses comment on this is that, as the Liberal member—the only one who's come to hear the evidence—has said, the argument that the Prime Minister keeps hanging his hat on, like a mantra, is yes, we may well sign on here, but we certainly wouldn't do it if it involved in any way the weaponization of space, or the militarization of space, because we're really opposed to that.

I wonder if I could ask both gentlemen to comment.

● (1635)

The Chair: Ambassador Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: There are close to 800 satellites of all kinds in space, the bulk of them commercial—communications satellites and things of that kind. Many of those commercial ones are used by the United States for its own military communications. The United States has about 100 exclusively military satellites, Russia about 40, and the rest of the world about 20. That's only military. These are satellites of all kinds, including the GPS, global positioning satellites.

I think they have come to be accepted by world opinion as there, and in most cases as desirable. The military communications and observations they enable are viewed by most people as a contribution to military stability, avoidance of conflict under misconceptions, and so on. No one is talking about eliminating them, and they are what is referred to by many as the “militarization” of space. However, as I've said, that is widely accepted as a given, and in most cases constructive, situation. There are no weapons in space, as far as is known at this time, of any country. It is these weapons, these destructive weapons, with capacity to destroy satellites, that we're talking about in terms of preventing the weaponization of space.

Those are our aims. We think the weaponization of space would open up a very dangerous era. There have already been several war games reported in the press, in which the military commanders, when they see that their satellites are wiped out, resort immediately, in these games, to use of nuclear weapons. That is the connection that I see between competition in space weapons in the earlier phases, and final resort to nuclear weapons, by those who feel that they maybe are being pressed and pushed into a position of secondary...and weakness by the deployment of weapons in space.

The Chair: Mr. Spring.

Mr. Baker Spring: I would respond to that as it relates to the militarization, the weaponization of space essentially in the following way. Clearly there's fairly strong consensus that what is up there is valuable. If what is up there is valuable, then it seems to me there should be a pretty compelling argument to attempt to defend it.

If there is a threat to assets in space, that doesn't have to originate from "weapons deployed in space". As was alluded to by my colleague, they can be attacked from things that would be surface-based. There are also many jamming techniques, and it's clearly known that the Russians have produced a GPS jammer that we were pretty certain the Iraqis were attempting to use.

To give you an idea on the other side about where we are in this, as I understand it, in Operation Desert Storm one of the first things that the U.S. Air Force did was to eliminate the Iraqi Intelsat downlinks, because we figured they were using them for military command and control.

These are all steps that it would be, in my judgment, reasonable for the United States military to have a capability to pursue, and I don't think that's nefarious. One of the things that I think we confuse in this arms control field is that arms control is a means to an end, not an end in itself. There's no moral value to the weapons, positive or negative. It's a question of what they're used for and what policies they support.

It does put a rather unfortunate requirement on it that it's always difficult and problematic to choose, to a certain degree, under certain circumstances, as to who are the bad guys and who are the good guys—certainly we had to make that choice, for example, with Iraq both in 1990-91 and more recently—and who's going to use those weapons to essentially subjugate and exploit a population militarily. That makes it more problematic to pursue broad-based multilateral solutions, because if you reduce it to the lowest common denominator, treating every country as essentially morally equivalent, you're going to run into a lot of problems.

I don't think the world came to an end, for example, because the United States chose, in Operation Desert Shield-Desert Storm, to eliminate Iraqi access to space-based assets. I think it was a good thing they did that.

● (1640)

The Chair: Ambassador Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: I would just add, Mr. Chairman, that I think the issue here that what we should keep before ourselves, if we can, is how to protect North America from nuclear arms missiles and, as an ancillary that we've also been talking about, how to protect existing space assets from the various threats that may threaten it.

So the issue is, what is the best means of dealing with this problem? The space missile defence and space weapons have been advanced as one means of dealing with the problem. I don't think they are good means of doing so.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Menzies.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank you both for your interesting presentations. I would be most interested to know if there's actually a union of unconcerned scientists out there. If so, I'd like to hear from them also.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: We'll try to find them for you.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Thank you.

As Mr. Sorenson already said, we're looking for as much information as we can get on this file, because to be very, very frank, the jury is still out as far as we're concerned. Our governing Liberals have said they were not going to agree to anything. They were not even going to talk about it during Mr. Bush's visit. Then we find out we talked about a lot of things. So we are pretty much in the dark on this side. So we're really looking for some answers on, first of all, what we committed ourselves to before we discussed it on the floor of the House of Commons, and secondly, where we're going to end up.

I guess I'm concerned about some of your comments, Mr. Dean, about there being no acute missile threat at this time. Why are we having this discussion, or these discussions worldwide, if indeed that is an accurate comment?

I also want to go back to your comment basically dismissing the question of whether North Korea is not likely to proliferate or be any larger threat than it is right now. Why are we not doing this multilaterally, through the United Nations, through NORAD, rather than what I am reading into this, that this is a U.S.-driven initiative? Should it not be multilateral? Is it not going to be more effective worldwide?

We have our commitments. Each country has its level of commitment. Should that not be the way we're going to approach this, if indeed we are going to approach it?

● (1645)

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: There are threats in the world from missiles, but they are short-range missiles and tactical-range missiles. Against the tactical-range missiles, some action has been taken by various programs. There are also cruise missiles, protection against which is inadequate, in my opinion.

The administration insists that there is a big danger of long-range ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. It is that which I contest. The administration says that terrorists, the axis of evil, or various other unnamed perpetrators would like to use long-range ballistic missiles against us.

In the case of Korea, they have suspended their tests. Their last long-range ballistic missile test in 1998 was a failure. It blew up in the air. They have agreed to continue to suspend the tests and even to give up their missile stock if we can come to an agreement with them about their security and about their economic well-being. They are afraid of American attack. There are ways to dissuade them from that, but it does seem to me that's the issue on which we should be focusing.

That's the only even remotely plausible long-range missile attack possibility against North America, and rather than having this $10-billion program, I would rather give $2 billion of it to North Korea, under suitable guarantees and verification, to have them do away with their missile program completely, and their nuclear program with it, than to spend my time figuring out the physics of missile defence, which are very uncertain.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Do you have a comment about the multilateral level?

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Yes, we should be pursuing that multilaterally. I think a multilateral missile warning system in which other countries could participate is something that has been suggested by both the United States and Russia at one time or another, including the present administration. Under President Clinton, we set up a mutual warning system to be located in Moscow, which hasn't come to fruition because of bickering between the two governments about tax and liability of people involved in these projects.

But yes, a multilateral approach is the right approach. If one can use these satellites to give warning of missile launches throughout the world, where you can have inspection of the cargo before launch takes place and various other things, then you've dealt with this problem in a more constructive way than we're thinking of doing now.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Could I have Mr. Spring's comments?

The Chair: Mr. Spring.

Mr. Baker Spring: Are you talking about a multilateral approach to North Korea, which I think is the "it" you're referring to, or are you talking about a multilateral approach to ballistic missile defence?

Mr. Ted Menzies: It's ballistic missile defence overall.

Mr. Baker Spring: Let me deal with North Korea first.

We did exactly what the ambassador recommended with regard to North Korea in 1994, and they cheated on it throughout. They immediately went to a secret enrichment program as a way of going in that direction. They essentially gave the U.S. a freeze, if you will, on the plutonium extraction program, and we gave them the money, we even gave them nuclear cooperation, and we gave them power cooperation, all of that to no avail. The North Koreans were interested in what could categorically be described as a bait and switch. To suggest that if you put more goodies on the table it will induce North Korea not to do exactly what it's done in the past becomes at this point a rather implausible argument.

As it relates to missile defence cooperation, that's exactly what the United States is doing. It has very active missile defence cooperation programs with a whole host of countries: the United Kingdom, Australia, Israel, Greenland-Denmark, and the Gulf Arab states. Turkey is probably interested; some of the new eastern European members of NATO are probably interested. We've had Russian cooperation in missile defence for several years now. They've gone to the test bed facility in Colorado and undergone some demonstrations and exercises.

So this is meant to be a global missile defence capability provided by the United States in cooperation with its friends and allies against what may emerge—dare I use the term—as the missile threat. There are capabilities there; I'm reluctant to use the word "threat", but that is exactly what the United States is doing.

Let me say one other thing too with regard to the capabilities. To say that the United States and Canada's exclusive threat to their territory—their two territories together, North America—is posed by long-range ballistic missiles isn't quite right. My judgment is that one of the things other countries—Iran in particular comes to mind—may be interested in doing is putting a shorter-range missile on some sort of boat off our coast, but it's still a ballistic missile and air defence assets aren't going to address it.

That was one of the things driving the United States when it moved to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, because technologically the ability to distinguish between long-range ballistic missile defence systems and shorter-range ballistic missile defence systems is impossible. If you try to essentially ban against long-range, you'll find your capabilities against the shorter-range are so degraded they're not particularly effective. That's why the United States Congress rejected a Clinton administration proposal to try to make that demarcation.

● (1650)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Monsieur Clavet, *s'il vous plaît*.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I want to ask Mr. Spring a question. He mentioned during his talk that missile interceptors were recently put in place in Alaska. I want to know when this was done and if NORAD was consulted before such a decision was made. I also want to know if this had an influence on Canada's decision to amend the agreement with NORAD on August 5, 2004. These two events occurred almost simultaneously.

Immediately after that, I want to ask Mr. Dean a question about what he referred to as the code of conduct.

[*English*]

Mr. Baker Spring: The answer is that the two are related. The missile interceptors that were going into Alaska, the so-called ground-based mid-course defence, were being done so an operational capability....

Let me say what this is. The system that is going to be in place in part in Alaska but also in other places around the world is designed primarily as a test bed—that is, it's for them to be able to test the technologies for missile defence—but it is also going to have an operational capability. The United States has done that on a number of occasions in the past, when it's taken research and development assets and used them, for lack of a better term, in a deployed mode. That is what has been done in Alaska in recent weeks, starting at about the end of summer; they were putting in these interceptors. I think there are about six there now. They have yet to be declared operational.

It is not absolutely set yet, but it is likely, almost a certainty, that the U.S. Northern Command—which by the way also has geographic responsibility for Canada but, interestingly enough, not Alaska—is probably going to be responsible for operating the missile defence system in the event of an attack. Now, our Strategic Command is responsible for integrating the overall system, so there are two military commands. Because NORAD is a component command of Northern Command at this point in time—that was achieved, I think, in 2002 with the so-called unified command plan—I would find it very surprising if there had not been extensive discussions—I don't know whether you'd call them consultations or not—between NORAD and Northern Command on what was going on here.

Clearly, there was something that led to the August 5 agreement, and what led to that, in my judgment, was that the United States was clearly going to use early warning missile assets to detect missiles and probably provide initial targeting vectors for any missile defence intercept that might be ordered as a result of this operational capability. The United States clearly wanted an agreement that NORAD's functions could be used to support missile defence operations. I think there is a linkage there, and the United States is very happy there is that agreement in place.

● (1655)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Clavet.

[*English*]

Ambassador Dean, do you have any comments?

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: On this, yes. There are supposed to be six interceptors in Alaska plus four at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. Together they make up the first ground-based mid-course missile defence system, which the administration ordered to be constructed, in our view, without real concern as to its effectiveness. The individual components were not tested, and in particular they would not be successful against decoys and other deception, which any country capable of putting out long-range missiles would be able to use. This missile defence system is more of a symbolic demonstration, a costly one and at the same time a risky one in terms of its possible entry into space-based weapons.

I believe you did have another question.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Clavet.

[*English*]

Mr. Roger Clavet: It was a very short one about the code of conduct,

[*Translation*]

I would like more information about the code of conduct to which you referred.

[*English*]

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: The code of conduct is a good device. It's amazing that the main missile countries of the world—the United States, the U.K., and some of the others that have led the world in producing missiles and using and deploying them—have convinced over 100 countries to sign up to the code of conduct against missile proliferation. It's one of the more remarkable political acts in a long time.

On the other hand, it is not a bad idea; it's a good idea. However, parts of this program never came to fruition, that is, rewards of cheap space launches, among other things, for those countries that were willing to abstain from having missiles. There was to be mutual inspection, pre-announcement of launch, and inspection of launch vehicles to make sure weapons were not being put into space. All of these things have not yet taken place, and we can only hope they will, but there's some doubt as to that possibility.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mrs. McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the most chilling part of the presentation you've made, Ambassador Dean, is the statement that you fear this process will end almost unavoidably in wars and nuclear holocaust, which of course causes us to struggle to see what possible reasons there would be for Canada to participate or, for that matter, for the Bush administration to proceed with all of this. Some of us keep trying to find out what the Prime Minister tries to persuade his caucus of in support of this, and as near as we can make out, because we haven't had the benefit of a full briefing, despite the fact that we're supposed to have had it, it is that George Bush asked, and that's what you do for a friend and a neighbour. As somebody before the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament so aptly commented when we were discussing this question at a meeting a couple of weeks ago, if you have a close friend and neighbour who's a severe alcoholic, you don't necessarily serve them booze because they ask for it.

Where I would like to go is to your very helpful proposals about what kinds of actions can be taken instead. Nobody is dismissing possible threats to satellites, nobody is making light of the growing capability of those who are so bloody-minded as to keep building weapons that threaten the world. I'm very intrigued by your reminding us about the Outer Space Treaty provisions in article 9, which invite a country to request consultation if they feel there is a way in which the treaty is actually being undermined, threatened, or whatever. Given the kind of mutual admiration society we saw and mutual declaration of devotion to multilateralism we heard from the Canadian Prime Minister and the U.S. President here last week, is this something you feel actually has potential in diplomatic terms? I think all of us are interested in diplomatic solutions, not military solutions, to the things that threaten us or are perceived as threats.

● (1700)

The Chair: Ambassador Dean, please.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: You understand the point? Go ahead.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Yes, sir. Thank you.

It's not our position here to get into the Canadian side of this decision, as I pointed out at the outset. But I assume that Canada would not want to get into this understanding without some written document setting it forth that can be reviewed by Parliament and others. That is for you to decide.

Yes, I think there is some prospect. The space treaty does provide for consultation. That's what it's for. There's no hostility or animosity connected with asking for consultation. It merely demonstrates that each side should look seriously at what they're doing. It's quite possible that several governments will do this. If the problem becomes acute, I think what we'll see first is an effort to develop the text of a treaty against weapons in space and see how far that gets in discussion before resort is made to consultation. That comes towards the end of the realm of measures that one can deal with. But some of the other things I mentioned, like a resolution of the General Assembly on non-interference, sound to me very non-controversial, something that everyone would welcome, including the United States.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Three very quick comments and perhaps questions.

First, Mr. Spring, you say that if the August change in the NORAD agreement had not been concluded and NORAD had not been allowed to perform these necessary functions, it's likely that the U.S. would have assigned these functions to entities outside NORAD. My question is, which other entity or which group do you believe would have been doing it? Would that have diminished Canada's security? Would it have diminished what we might call equivalency, balancing a New York with a Toronto, a Minneapolis with a Winnipeg, as far as security is concerned?

Second, Ms. McDonough stated that's it's chilling that unavoidably this process will end with space wars and nuclear holocaust. Again, I think that's quite a statement to casually throw out there. On one hand, we're being told that there's no imminent acute missile threat, then on the other hand, we're being told that here we are close, that this one step may lead to a nuclear holocaust. That moves me more to a place saying that if we're going to casually talk about a nuclear holocaust, Canada had at least better be accepting and understanding that this is a potential threat and we'd better be part of some kind of security against that.

Mr. Dean, in one of the statements you made—and I find it hard to believe—you said that rather than spend $10 billion on BMD, you would rather spend $2 billion to pay North Korea to disband what they have.

I sit back thinking, is that what we should be doing? Do you believe the role of Canada or the United States is to pay rogue nations to disband, to perhaps, in effect, reward them for having them? We talk about a deterrent. Wouldn't that be some leader saying that we will disband for this much? Isn't it going to lead to that? I don't think that would ever happen. I think the greater chance that something may happen is that some country will say, well, we will take it out. That would be the offensive, compared to what we have as a defensive with the BMD.

Comment on those three, please.

● (1705)

The Chair: We have diverse opinions on this. We'll let Mr. Spring start.

Mr. Baker Spring: As it related to the August change in NORAD, if it had not occurred, it was fairly clear that the administration had assigned responsibility for integrating the ballistic missile defence system to a newly reorganized Strategic Command. That newly reorganized Strategic Command included what was formerly called Space Command. I think that if NORAD had been blocked from supporting missile defence operations in the context of a declared operational capability, Strategic Command and its acquired element of Space Command would have undertaken that effort.

As a result, would it have weakened? In my judgment, both NORAD and to a certain degree the structure of the U.S.-Canadian alliance—I think that almost goes without saying. But I would say this: it wouldn't be as damaging as the prospect of actually having a missile launch and having a breakdown in U.S.-Canadian relations within NORAD that resulted in a successful missile attack on North America. I couldn't think of anything more damaging than that. So in the absence of this NORAD agreement, I certainly think the preferable option for the United States would have been to create the capability outside NORAD, probably at Strategic Command.

As it relates to this, I agree with you, there's some casual linkage between...if we do something with regard to space-based assets and this militarization or weaponization of space, because of the war games that we've seen, it is immediately going to lead to the exchange of nuclear weapons on a major level. I think it is just not so. Yes, if you were to undertake certain forms of attacks on space-based assets, that would lead to considerable instabilities, but to say that all of such things would is wrong.

Let me use the example in the opposite. We basically dismantled, between the two governments, our air defence capabilities, because primarily we were concerned about the instabilities of defences that were alluded to, both with regard to air and missile defences with regard to the Soviet Union. As a result, we also jettisoned any “lesser included cases” that happened to be in the air defence field—hijacked airliners being plowed into buildings. We had no air asset capabilities, within range, that would have taken out those aircraft, despite a presidential order to do so, given the timelines involved on September 11.

So if you focus on one level of instability at the exclusion of any other sources of instability, in my judgment you're being a bit narrow in your focus.

As it relates to North Korea, not only do I agree with you, but the sad thing is that we tried that. We offered them all sorts of goodies. I don't know whether it added up to $2 billion, I think it was probably more, including a nuclear cooperation. We were going to supply them with light water reactors that would probably increase, admittedly not extracted, a plutonium source that would be enormous.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ambassador Dean.

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: As I understand the argument, if there's no acute threat of long-range missiles, then how did we get from there to problems with weapons in space, which may cause real difficulties?

I don't think there is at the present time an acute threat of a long-range missile attack on North America, with one exception, and that is that if the still-alerted weapons of the United States and Russia are triggered by error or false understanding, there is a serious danger there. That is why many people today insist that the first and most dangerous thing to be dealt with is the alert system.

However, even if there is not, with that exception, an acute danger of long-range nuclear missile attack against North America, that does not mean the measures taken to deal with a problem that is not, in my view, very great cannot have extremely dangerous consequences. That is what I've been pointing to. With the existence of this first missile defence system, there is already an anti-satellite capability the United States could simply use to eliminate many of the satellites of either China, Russia, or anyone else. That fact is going to cause acute nervousness and concern in both Moscow and Beijing, and they're going to do something about it. It may lead to competition and anti-satellite weapons; it may lead to the development of other weapons. But there's nothing anodyne or harmless about the weaponization of space within a competitive world where no one can maintain an advantage permanently.

As for North Korea, it is deceptive and thoroughly untrustworthy. Its aim is survival. I don't believe it will survive very long in domestic terms. On the other hand, it's looking for a way out—some temporary guarantees. Those temporary guarantees should include negotiation, some development costs, probably—it is a desperately poor country as a result of their own policies—and some security guarantees by the United States and the other negotiation partners there.

I see nothing in that package that is not preferable to spending $10 billion for a missile defence system against a danger I don't consider to be great. There are, as I think both of us have been saying, short-term dangers, such as cruise missile attack and short-term ballistic missiles, that do represent some dangers. We don't seem to be dealing with them very intensely.

● (1710)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Phinney, please.

Ms. Beth Phinney: I've been looking at Mr. Spring's comments here about NATO—how you've tried to imply we're almost there already. Maybe that's how you feel: that we're almost there already. This agreement that was signed August 5 says the amendment will allow NORAD to support missile defence operations. Can you tell me what agreement we had before, and what was in this agreement that you feel allows us to do this?

Mr. Baker Spring: The agreement is very brief and flexible or broad in its application. Basically it's an exchange of notes between the Canadian ambassador to the United States and the U.S. Secretary of State that says, at the heart of it, in the most operative paragraph—and I'll dig it out and read it to you if you want me to—that both sides understand that normal NORAD operations, as defined in NORAD's own terms of reference, can be used to support missile defence operations. It's pretty much as simple as that.

Ms. Beth Phinney: So your next step in thinking is that it's logical that NORAD would go ahead with plans that the American President has? I mean, they could just automatically go into that with no further agreement?

● (1715)

Mr. Baker Spring: Let me explain how I think NORAD is meant to work in this context. NORAD's traditional role in ballistic missiles is early warning, that is, to detect the launches of ballistic missiles and to inform both the United States and Canadian governments of that fact and the trajectories of where they're headed. It's an early warning function. What are you going to use that information for? You can use it, in the Cold War context, to scramble your bombers. Or you can use it to send your submarines to sea. You can use it if it's an accidental attack and maybe for some—at least quasi-effective, on the outer rims of where it would attack—civil defence.

So there are a number of things you can do with this information that's related to the detection and the trajectories of missiles that might be launched at North America.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Let me just interrupt you.

A witness we had here suggested that it would actually be NORAD, with our people working there, that would run this system.

Mr. Baker Spring: No, not quite.

Ms. Beth Phinney: Okay, what do you mean by “not quite”?

Mr. Baker Spring: What would happen is that NORAD would have this information. The question is, who would the information be shared with and for what, in this particular context, military purpose would it be used for?

Basically, what the agreement says is that normally what NORAD does—one of the uses it can go to—is provide some initial launch warning and targeting information to those commands that would be responsible for operating missile defence systems. Now, what are those commands in the U.S. structure? This is a global missile defence system. For example, if it's a short-range launch out of Iran at U.S. forces in Iraq, it would be Central Command that would be responsible for actually executing the defence. If it is an attack from North Korea, for example, against Hawaii, Hawaii falls under the responsibility of Pacific Command, not Northern Command, so it would be Pacific Command that would actually be operating the defence. If you're talking about a defence of North America, it's going to be Northern Command. At least that's the way it's shaping up.

Ms. Beth Phinney: If it's going to take that long.... You don't have half an hour, do you, to sit there and say these people are going to make the decision there—one American sitting there saying this is what we're going to do?

Mr. Baker Spring: The responsibility for integrating all of this into what we term a system of systems is Strategic Command. What Strategic Command is going to do is play what we call a supporting role in the military command structure. It will make sure that all these other geographic combatant commanders will have the system in place to draw on what they need to, as we do for traditional conventional military operations, to execute military missions that are under their geographic purview.

The Chair: Before closing, I have one question for Mr. Spring.

Mr. Spring, would it be possible to deploy a missile defence system and still pursue the missile control measure recommended by Ambassador Dean?

Mr. Baker Spring: You 're talking about the code of conduct?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Baker Spring: Yes, I think so. I think actually it will provide incentives for countries to go in that direction, because if you have relatively poor countries, like North Korea, that may arrive at the conclusion that the missile option isn't providing them much leverage, they're probably going to be more likely to give it up.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: I have a follow-up on that.

The Chair: Just a follow-up, and then we'll close.

Mr. Sorenson.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: This is more of a technical question following up that one.

I was told by someone who had visited NORAD that the technology is there already. If there was a launch in another country, and maybe it might be by mistake, maybe it might be in error, we have the technology to know within 20 seconds where that missile is destined to land.

Mr. Baker Spring: In general terms you are correct. But you have to understand there's a critical difference there. It's one thing to detect a missile launch and have a pretty good idea of where it's going to land. It's another thing to have enough information about that flight trajectory that you can actually use a kinetic energy weapon to destroy it in flight.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: So the ballistic missile defence system gives them time. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Baker Spring: What will happen is the Cheyenne Mountain operation centre where NORAD is housed will provide, with NORAD, traditional detection of the launch and a pretty good idea of where the missile is going to land on the basis of projected trajectories. Those are useful pieces of information that will also be fed to other elements of the global missile defence capability that will provide additional targeting information.

In the case of the ground-based mid-course defence, you can launch a missile to a point in space that is roughly on the path of the missile trajectory and home in on it with enough clarity that you can actually take something that has no explosive warhead and ram it into the incoming ballistic missile warhead or re-entry vehicle, as we call it, in order to destroy it. With regard to NORAD's capabilities today, it provides the initial information that is then further refined by other elements of the system, including and most particularly the kill vehicle's own sensor network.

● (1720)

The Chair: Mr. Dean, on the answer that Mr. Spring gave me concerning missile defence and, at the same time, pursuing the missile control measures, do you agree with his answer?

His Excellency Jonathan Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The code of conduct refers to the proliferation of offensive missiles. There has been very little effort to control that through agreements. This is a beginning in that field. I don't see any contradiction, but also no relationship necessarily, between the two.

The Chair: Thank you.

I must thank both of our guests today. It was very interesting.

Thank you very much for your time and for coming here to Canada, Mr. Spring and Mr. Dean. You are most welcome.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :
http://www.parl.gc.ca
