

While many Canadian editorialists initially applauded the government's willingness to proceed with the tests, the uproar in Parliament and the public outcry forced the Ministers to return to the committee to explain the government's position. A majority of the committee supported the government. But four members — two NDP, one Liberal and one Tory — issued a 'minority report', deploring the decision to allow US tests. Organizing around the issue of cruise testing, Canadian peace groups became more active and got greater coverage in the press. In response to the public debate, Trudeau went to the unusual length of sending a long and detailed 'open letter' to Canadian newspapers in which he defended the Liberal government's position on cruise testing.

The cruise missile issue seemed to bring the nuclear arms race 'home' for Canadians. In his survey of Canadian coverage, this journalist found that the *volume* of newspaper clippings in each file was revealing. Filed under the label "missiles" were stories of every kind of nuclear weapon. Due to the heavy coverage of the cruise question in 1982, there was more than twice as much in this one year's file as there was in all of the files under that label for the past twelve years. The number of clippings for 1983, when the umbrella testing agreement with the United States was finally signed, was nearly three times as great as that for 1982.

From 1982 on, in contrast to past reporting, much more of the analysis was provided by Canadian writers, both journalists and academics. Furthermore, coverage was devoted not merely to the question of cruise testing, but included the effect of cruise missiles on the nuclear arms race and on arms control negotiations, specifically the failing START and INF talks in Europe.

An entirely new focus for the nuclear arms debate was introduced on 23 March 1983 when President Reagan proclaimed his desire for a new strategic defence initiative (SDI) that would make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete." This unexpected and grandiose scheme, immediately labelled 'Star Wars' by the media, drew widespread skeptical comment and in-depth political analysis in the Canadian press.

A *Victoria Times-Colonist* editorial, labelled "Star Gazing," concluded that the President's hint about "a modified zero option policy for missile deployment in Europe holds more promise than his Star Wars dream." The *Toronto Star* called "Reagan's Wrong Path to Peace" a dream that might become "our waking nightmare." *Le Soleil's* René Beaudin had one of the few analytical backgrounders that linked SDI to the 1982 confidential US Defence Guidance doctrine of fighting in space and surviving a nuclear war. An editorial in the *Winnipeg Free*

*Press* entitled "An Old Outer Space Story" explained how the US Anti-Ballistic Missile initiative of the sixties had been wisely tempered by the ABM treaty, and predicted that financial and technological considerations might strangle SDI, even if it was not first discarded for the obvious strategic and political reasons. But the *Toronto Sun* editorial writers urged Reagan to abandon "vague talk about laser beams preventing nuclear war," to tell the people how badly off US defence was, and to "get a first strike missile that will knock out Soviet hardened silos."

In the wake of Reagan's 'Star Wars' speech and the collapse of the START and INF talks in December 1983, confrontational rhetoric between Washington and Moscow intensified, and an alarmed Prime Minister Trudeau began to organize his own peace initiative in 1983. His purpose was to stimulate the will to negotiate and to generate a more conciliatory atmosphere. Despite the lack of interest in Washington and in some Western capitals, Trudeau's travels were covered extensively by the Canadian media; journalists travelled with him to Asia and Europe, to Washington and Moscow.

In 1985 Canada had a new Conservative government under Brian Mulroney, and media interest in arms control and disarmament continued, spurred by the House Defence Committee's review of the NORAD agreement, due for renewal in 1986. The name had been changed to the North American *Aerospace* Defence command and it soon became evident that the focus of media attention would be the potential effects of Reagan's 'Star Wars' initiative on the role of Canada in NORAD. These concerns elicited a stream of hard news stories, feature commentaries and editorials on the subject; again, much of it now from Canadian journalists and academics. This flurry of coverage continued into 1986 when the NORAD extension was signed at the Mulroney-Reagan "Shamrock Summit" on 1 April.

During the same period, there had been a great deal of media coverage on the public dialogue going on between Washington and Moscow, in preparation for the Geneva summit in the fall of 1985 and the subsequent meeting in Reykjavik in the fall of 1986.

## BETTER SOURCES

The newspaper files on NATO issues, on Geneva arms control talks, on East-West disarmament proposals and summits have shown a visible growth over the past decade, and an encouraging increase of analysis by Canadians. One reason for that, aside from Canadian public concerns about cruise missile testing, the 'Star Wars' programme and NORAD developments, is that the government has become