

across the country. In all public forums, there was a rather silent majority of participants who had clearly come to listen. Whether their silence can be taken as a indication of support for existing policies or whether their concerns were being expressed by others is, of course, difficult to determine. Whilst there was often frustration and hostility expressed over Government policies, there was also a great deal of support expressed for the type of genuine consultation and dialogue present in the public forums. It was clear that more communication with the Government -- at the bureaucratic and political level -- would be welcomed.

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Set against the backdrop of the then recent U.S. attack on Libya and the Canadian Government's perceived support of that action, as well as in the context of an apparent lack of progress at the Geneva bilaterals and with a question mark seeming to hang over the hoped-for Washington summit meeting between President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev, the atmosphere in public forums ranged from concern to anger.

Seeing the U.S. action in Libya in the context of what was viewed by some to be an increasingly belligerent United States foreign policy, many expressed opposition to American actions and deep disappointment at Canada's concurrence. The issue was viewed less in terms of dealing with terrorism and more in terms of the principle of using force -- in apparent contravention of the U.N. Charter -- in order to solve what were seen as essentially political/socio-economic problems. This action was seen by many to bear directly on the arms control and disarmament fields.

There was general concern expressed over the perceived course and direction of Canadian foreign policy. It became apparent that much of the Canadian public had absorbed, though not necessarily accepted, the Government's message regarding its intention to pursue a special and enhanced relationship with the U.S. It will be noted that criticisms were generally directed against the U.S., leaving the Soviet Union not necessarily unimplicated, but often unscathed. This U.S. focus could be attributed to several factors which might include: the recent Gorbachev initiative with its publicly appealing vision and programme for disarmament; U.S. actions, such as the Libya raid; U.S. refusal to discuss a nuclear testing moratorium; and its continued testing programme. Because of Canada's closer relations to U.S. policy, many feared that Canada's long-standing traditional positions on arms control and disarmament questions might be weakened. Thus, it could be said that