

and asked whether anybody was listening. Obviously no one in the United States was listening to Canada: the *New York Times* gave Trudeau's speech two paragraphs at the end of a long column of tired rhetoric by Andrei Gromyko. When the UN special session finally wound up on July 8 it was generally dismissed as being scuttled by national grievances, although Southam newspapers and one agency report noted that revamping of the UN Disarmament Commission and the entry of France and China into these negotiations.

In the early seventies the diplomatic talks on SALT II had been buried under news about the Vietnam war. The SALT talks dragged on throughout the decade so that the signing of the treaty in June 1979 received only cursory coverage in Canada. Commentaries in the *Chronicle-Herald* (Halifax) and *La Presse* (Montreal), for instance, expressed skepticism about whether peace and security had been advanced by the treaty considering that both sides retained thousands of nuclear weapons. Other reviews of the treaty commented on the difficulty of coping with the baffling acronyms involved. A few pieces discussed the negative reaction in the US Congress, but interest in the subject was soon overtaken by the Iranian hostage crisis that began in November.

In the same fall of 1979, Canada and its NATO allies were faced with one of the most important decisions in the alliance's recent history: the proposal to deploy cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, unless an agreement reducing Euromissiles could be reached with the Soviet Union. This was the so-called "two-track" decision.

This writer's earlier survey of Canadian newspaper coverage of that issue⁴ revealed the paucity of straight news coverage of this important decision, and the total absence of any serious analysis of its political implications. Most of the newspapers across Canada treated this decision as no more than a military modernization programme, as it was portrayed by NATO authorities, a counter-deployment in response to the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles in Europe. None examined why the Soviet Union had installed its SS-20 missiles in the first place. Only a couple of articles mentioned the dangers that the new NATO weapons posed for the future of arms control: the 'concealability' of the cruise and the provocatively short flight-time of the Pershing II to military targets near Moscow. Very few reports discussed the reasons that these missile deployments were causing such discord in the NATO alliance, and none discussed what Canada should do since the Clark government was determined to keep out of the debate.

Yet this decision continues to haunt us. It did not encourage the Soviet Union to reach an immediate

agreement on intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) reductions in Europe; rather the Soviets walked out of both strategic and Euromissile talks in 1983. It spurred the revival of the peace movement in Europe and tested the unity of the alliance. And eventually it was used by the Canadian government as a rationale for testing the cruise missile in Canada, even though the question of testing was technically a bilateral issue with the United States.

Coverage of the NATO decision was soon replaced by news of Trudeau's re-election in 1980, and by such foreign news as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the continuing Iranian hostage story, the American elections and the Solidarity crisis in Poland. During a seminar on nuclear issues at the Canadian Learned Societies' summer conference, Geoffrey Pearson, then Chief Advisor on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs, concluded that "survival in the nuclear age is something most of us don't want to discuss." Only one reporter covered the proceedings.

In 1981, with Reagan inaugurated and his anti-Communist rhetoric being turned into action in Central America and into inaction on arms control, the Canadian media began to take more interest in peace and security issues. The *Globe and Mail*, which had given minimal coverage to the "two-track" decision, ran an excellent and lengthy series of articles by an editorial writer, Stan McDowell, that delved seriously into arms control issues and the latest spiral in the nuclear arms race. Much of the rest of Canadian press commentary, with some notable exceptions, was written by Americans or derived from Washington sources, although the French language press relied on *Agence France Presse* with analysis by experts in France and West Germany. The growing protests and demonstrations of the peace activists in Europe were drawing more coverage in Canadian papers by the end of that year.

On 10 February 1982, Southam News broke the story that the Trudeau government was negotiating an agreement with the United States to test the air-launched cruise missile and its guidance equipment over the Canadian north. The rationale given for these tests was that the Canadian terrain was similar to the Soviet northland. At the time the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence (SCEAND) was meeting to outline a Canadian position for the upcoming UN Second Special Session on Disarmament, but neither the Minister of Defence nor the Minister of External Affairs bothered to inform committee members of the on-going bilateral negotiations with the United States. Since an agreement would allow tests of unarmed cruise missiles and other types of weapons in Canada, the committee wanted to know the implications of those tests for arms control and disarmament.