

The Cruise: a "military frill"

VANCOUVER (CUP) — As an American cruise missile flew over Canada January 19, Canadian students and faculty conducted polls which found 82 per cent of the public objects to the weapons.

Carole O'Vierne, a fourth-year biochemistry student at the University of Toronto, worked on the "Real Cruise Test", an informal survey of 50 Canadian communities spon-

sponsored by the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign.

Respondents were asked: "Do you agree Canada should stop testing the Cruise and start testing what it can do for world peace?"

Of 415 students polled at U of T, 305, or 73 per cent, voted to end cruise testing.

Nationally, 82 per cent — or 9118 of the 11,088 respondents — were against the tests.

"There was a general awareness of the issue", O'Vierne said the U of T poll.

"I see cruise testing as an extension of American military strategy and do not think Canada should be a part of that," she said.

In the Atlantic provinces, 467 people, or 86 per cent, were against the tests.

C.G. "Giff" Gifford of the Veterans Against Nuclear Disar-

mament says 100 per cent of the members are opposed to cruise missile testing, particularly the air launch missile like the ones tested this week in Alberta. "They are a military frill even if one believes in nuclear determent. The Trident nuclear subs with their D-5 missiles can destroy the Soviet Union by themselves."

Organizers see the poll as part of the continuing trend against Cruise testing since 1983, when the Trudeau government first agreed to test the weapon, and Canadians were evenly divided on the issue.

On Canada's west coast, students from the Langara campus of Vancouver Community College helped organize a downtown protest.

When armed, the cruise carries a 200-kiloton warhead with 15 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb.

That's a force equivalent to 100 Halifax Explosions of 1917.

Among faculty opposing the cruise was Vassos Hadzilacos, a computer science professor who helped organize the U of T poll.

"The Canadian government previously justified the test on the basis of wanting to make progress in the INF (Intermediate

Nuclear Forces) negotiation," said Hadzilacos.

But since Reagan and Gorbachev agreed in December to scrap medium-range missiles, the Canadian government should honour its earlier statement and cancel cruise testing, he said.

"The States are our allies and they protect us — we should provide the ground for the cruise to be tested," said Karl Kottmeier, a second-year History student at the University of British Columbia.

Kottmeier sees the cruise's pinpoint accuracy as a military asset, while other view it as destabilizing, encouraging plans for fighting a "limited" nuclear war.

Another factor in the debate on the cruise is its speed.

When Defence Minister Perrin Beatty visited UBC last spring, he told students the Cruise, a relatively slow flying weapon, would be used only for retaliatory purposes.

But students said they were worried that new generations of the missile, equipped with radar-evading "stealth" technology and supersonic speed, would surely be first-strike weapons, further destabilizing the fragile nuclear balance.

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Share the blame

WINNIPEG (CUP) — As the Olympic flame passed through the streets of Winnipeg, people shouting "share the blame" demonstrated in support of the Lubicon Indian band boycott of the Olympics.

Chief Louis Stevenson of the Pequis Indian Band led about 50 people in a protest in front of the Manitoba legislative buildings last week.

"The Canadian government is being hypocritical for supporting the removal of oppression of people in other countries, but they cannot solve a small problem like the Lubicons and other Indian bands in Canada," said Stevenson, adding that the problem with the Lubicons should "have been dealt with more than 40 years ago".

Stevenson said the demonstrators are not calling for a boycott of the Olympics, but are showing support for the Lubicons. He spoke of the land claim battle which began over 40 years ago. Now, he says, 90 per cent of the band is unemployed and 20 per cent of the population has tuberculosis.

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