

## *The UN, disarmament and Canadians*

disarmament. They also strongly tend to ascribe mutual (though not necessarily equal) blame for the waning of détente. When asked to choose between blaming the USSR, the US, or both, almost two-thirds (64%) of the respondents in the CIIA survey agree that "both US and USSR policies have undermined détente." About one in four (28%) points to the Soviets and one in twelve (8%) to the Americans. The questionnaire also asked whether the USSR, US, and China were each content with or were trying to increase their areas of influence. While a vast majority (90%) believe the USSR is trying to increase its area of influence, a considerable majority (78%) believe US is as well. Most (56%) think China, on the other hand, is content with its current area of influence, while 44% think it too is expansionist.

These rather surprisingly negative, perhaps increasingly negative, views of the US are further reflected in additional questions on the degree of confidence felt in the ability of the US and of the Reagan administration in particular, to deal wisely with present world problems. A majority (58%) express little or very little confidence in US ability, while about one in three (36%) express very great or considerable confidence. (This result corroborates the pattern of a decreasing confidence in the US over recent years reflected in recent Canadian Gallup polls.) When asked about confidence in the Reagan administration specifically, respondents in the recent survey are even less positive. Almost two-thirds (63%) express little or very little confidence and only one in five (21%) expresses very great or considerable confidence.

Perhaps even more striking are the responses of a sizable minority to the question on the CIIA survey which said: "Looking ahead to the next year or so, which country do you think will be the greatest threat to world peace?" Long asked by the Gallup poll, this question has tended to produce varying results. During the 1950s the most commonly seen major threat was the USSR. During the late 1960s, with the influence of the Vietnam war, it was China. And during the 1970s the focus tended to shift back on the USSR. The possible answers provided on the CIIA questionnaire were China, Soviet Union, and "other." A bare majority (51%) chose the USSR. Less than 1% of the respondents chose China. Even more surprisingly, 21% explicitly wrote in, under "other," the United States. It seems clear that at least part of the more negative perception of the US shown here is an evident concern or antipathy by some towards the military and security policies of the current administration in Washington. It should also be noted that recent US polls suggest large numbers of Americans are becoming similarly concerned about these policies. For example, a recent survey conducted by Time Magazine, found that one in every three thinks Reagan's policies are increasing the threat of nuclear war.

### **Push for peace, but in two directions now**

In general, the Canadians surveyed here remain committed to the principles and policies of détente despite deteriorating East-West relations, harsh new rhetoric, and new senses of threat. When asked how important it is in East-West relations that Canada continue to pursue a long-term goal of détente, seven out of ten (70%) said it was very

important. This figure was approximately twice the number who similarly rated the other options provided, including maintaining a policy very consistent with other Western countries and building up Canadian military capabilities along with those of other Western countries.

It would be extremely difficult to summarize adequately the numerous, diverse, and sometimes paradoxical findings from this preliminary analysis of the recent CIIA survey. There can be no question though that, overall, the Canadians surveyed here are much concerned about the dangers of nuclear war, strongly advocate actual reductions in the vast nuclear arsenals of both superpowers, and support the negotiation of agreements covering a range of problems from chemical warfare to conventional arms sales. As befits a reasonably well-informed segment of the populace of a lesser power on the international scene, they also agree on the need for multi-lateral alliance ties and collective defence arrangements and on the need for maintaining if not increasing Canada's military contribution to its own and to that collective defence. At the same time there is also evidence of a substantial degree of support for East-West détente and of disquiet, at the very least, regarding some of the rhetoric and policies currently being pursued by the leader of the Western alliance.

If the results from the present survey can be generalized, and if historical context can be applied, they suggest, at a very general level, a public mood and outlook very compatible with a traditional Canadian foreign policy role as a moderating liberal conscience of the Western alliance. This role was perhaps more prominent at the time of Dulles than of détente, but it may be undergoing strengthening once again in the so-called "post-détente" era. If so, it may well be buttressed or even forced a little by the sort of public attitudes apparent in the present survey. Canadian diplomats in the 1950s played the moderate tune, usually quietly, when the practical international political realities seemed to permit. But, given the Cold War mood of the times, their pursuits did not enjoy the same degree of public support such efforts would seem to have today. Therein lies both a potential advantage and a potential difficulty for Canadian policy-makers in the 1980s. The advantages in general of a supportive public are obvious. The difficulties, if more occasional, may be troublesome. They will arise from the public's traditional obstreperousness in accepting the officially-felt need for flexibility and compromise in pursuing sometimes conflicting goals and in dealing with allies. Indeed such a case may already have arisen. Recent controversy over the use of Canadian territory to test a new weapon system, which represents a substantial increment both to US national capabilities and to the arms race, may well have been fueled by the sort of attitudes which the present survey suggests are now prevalent among Canadians. □

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