

Reflections on the Arms Race

By CYNTHIA DAVIS

What does it mean to live in the shadow of nuclear weapons and the rapidly escalating arms race? As a Canadian does it affect my life differently than it does a person living in a developing country? I believe that my life is affected differently and that I have a different perception than the "Third World" woman.

I guess that my primary concern as a Canadian is the threat of nuclear war or accident which could entail the destruction of everything and everyone that I have known and of my whole way of life. However, there is another way in which I am affected by the arms race.

The production, use and sale of armaments and the production of components of nuclear weapons systems are examples of government policies that bolster my standard of living. Because we control and/or consume many times our share of the world's resources, we are financing our way of life at the expense of those people who live in the developing world. If we could reduce our military budgets, our demand for resources would also be reduced. These resources could then be used for more humane purposes and distributed in a more just way.

It would benefit my counterpart in a developing country if the goal of reduced spending for military purposes was achieved and coupled with a more equitable distribution of goods.

Canadian spending for military purposes in 1984 will be about \$9.6 billion. World military expenditures will be about \$700 billion. This is more than the total income of 1.5 billion people living in the 50 poorest countries in the world. Of course, these huge numbers are meaningless unless we remember that everyone of

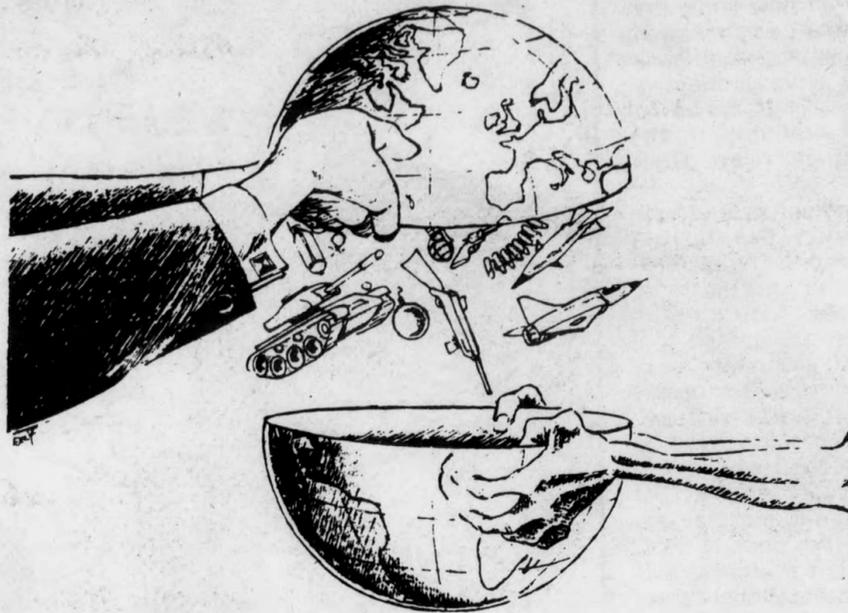
those 1.5 billion is a human being whose needs are emotional and spiritual, as well as physical. The quality of that person's life is important, as well as how long she lives. The destitution which we allow to exist in developing countries, by using scarce resources to promote our militaristic policies, is so complete that it amounts to silent, albeit unintentional, genocide.

This is the reality that a person in a developing country has to live and die with. Lack of clean water and clean air, of basic medicine and vaccines, of humane

family planning strategies and of education are all problems that can be dealt with now — if we want to deal with them. For example, by sacrificing one jet fighter we could finance the setting-up

of 40,000 village pharmacies. The technology exists and if the money and resources spent on military programs could be diverted into alternative life-saving programs, Canadians would be taking part in creating a different, and better, world.

People in the "Third World" can't begin to cope with their serious economic and social difficulties unless they are helped by us to achieve a basic minimum standard of health. We haven't paid attention to what is happening to the majority of people in our world and have selfishly clung to a wasteful and inequitable economic system, blindly pursuing military "security" at all cost. Unless we decide to change things our world will remain a very different one from that inhabited by the majority. Until we decide to change things we will have cast aside our responsibility as humans and condemned millions to poverty and death.



Testing the Cruise



Saskatchewan border. It would be carried by a B-52, bomber dropped where it would then closely hug the ground. It has a preprogrammed computer with an electric map that would steer itself by a system called "Tercom" (Terrain control matching).

A number of interesting observations have arisen from the testing of the Cruise in Canada. A Toronto psychiatrist, Frank Sommers, said that even if no shot is fired it affects our society. He feels some children are so worried about the possibility of a

nuclear war they are sometimes driven to be apathetic, frightened and in fear of the uncertainty of their future. This leads them to what is considered erratic and impulsive behaviour for children of their age.

The Cruise has generated more mail to the PMO* than any other issue in Canada. On November 22, 1982 it was reported that approximately 140 MP's hocked the referendum known as Operation Dismantle - 33 of these members were N.D.P. and 25 Liberals. The Conservatives were undecided.

*Prime Minister's Office



"How can we know that no one can win a nuclear war unless we try it and see?"