

DECEMBER 10, 1987, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

I - Public Forum

Mrs. Joanna Miller, the first panelist, began by saying she was "more depressed than ever" following the signing of the INF Treaty. She is fearful that complacency will set in and further she questions whether the removal of intermediate and shorter range missiles from Europe will make any difference. In addition, 50% cuts in strategic systems would not constitute a ban on new weapon systems. Canada should be more effective in advocating a CTB and should submit a draft treaty to the Conference on Disarmament. Also, we ought to be wary of the military/industrial complex and the power of the right wing in the USA.

Dr. Asit Sarkar, the second panelist, confined his remarks to one dimension, that of the arms trade or, as he expressed it alternatively, arms aid. He called for greater clarity and openness in reporting of statistics and reminded the audience that arms control is a world issue - not just one which affects Europe.

The first audience questioner professed to an outlook "even bleaker" than that of Mrs. Miller. He criticized Canada on the subject of a CTB and contended that verification of a treaty did not present any problems. Another participant advocated that future arms control moves be taken with moderation using the INF Treaty as a base and as a Confidence Building Measure. A comment supporting Ambassador Roche and his work received general audience support as did expressed concern about the DND White Paper. Support for SDI was expressed as the USSR was carrying out research in that area, and as Canada had declined to cooperate with the USA on a government to government basis. Once again the advice of Ambassador Roche was sought on the subject of how NGO's could be more effective. One person suggested a letter writing campaign as one choice.

During the question period, the method of disposal of INF weapons was raised as was the contention that Canada is providing nuclear fuel to the USA for use in nuclear weapons. One participant advocated Canadian withdrawal from NATO while another sought assurance that we would not reduce our troop commitments to NATO. Another assessed that the USSR was a more peaceful society than the USA. Other concerns dealt with human rights and lessons to be gained from the INF Treaty.