

smash barriers and tear gas" instead of a stuffy sit-down conference.

Nevertheless, Leprince suggested that the Quebec City Summit might be different due to a political will for the FTAA that could lead to concrete action on the part of hemispheric leaders. Leprince stressed the critical responsibility of journalists to assess free trade and its expected social impact, and noted the opportunity presented by the Summit to expose such matters. The time leading up to the Summit will also allow for analysis of current regional issues, and Radio-Canada will be sending reporters to Argentina for the Trade Minister's meeting preceding the Summit. As well, Radio-Canada will do a piece on the upcoming elections in Peru, and the effects of five years of NAFTA on Mexico. Generally, Leprince was more optimistic about foreign coverage in the francophone media than his English-speaking counterparts. While he felt the Quebec media had generally done a poor job of foreign coverage in the past, foreign coverage is increasingly featured in newspapers and higher up in the broadcast line-up, and there are more resources dedicated to foreign coverage. He hoped the Summit would allow for a forum to address key regional issues in a comprehensive fashion.

Latin America and the Caribbean as reflected in the Canadian media: How far have we come?

CBC Radio Producer Bob Carty claimed that Canadian coverage of the Americas is weak and is only moving backwards. Out of a sample group of 1400 recent international stories aired by the CBC, only 60 individual stories dealing with 8 distinct news items were about Latin America.

Carty suggested three reasons for the poor coverage. First, Canadian journalism is caught in a vicious cycle whereby editors demand that journalists present evidence of public interest while pitching a story about Latin America, and yet, without these stories, public interest cannot be generated. The lack of coverage is also a response to the end of the Cold War. As much as it distorted perceptions of Latin America, the Cold War made it easier for journalists to explain to their readers why Latin American issues were relevant. During the 1980s, countries like Nicaragua fit into the dramatic arc. Finally, Carty described a 'spotlight effect' that is the excessive concentration on one or two stories to the exclusion of others; "it is the epitome of pack journalism" he noted, and it distorts reality by leaving everything else in the dark. The danger with this type of coverage is that the world may not see the warning signs of tragedies such as the Rwandan genocide. As well, "the spotlight has no memory. Every time it is turned on it's like a new light shining on things. No context. No history." Perhaps the greatest concern is that the spotlight is removed before the recovery from a crisis begins, and when the issues of lasting importance are taking shape.

Joanne McPherson, Senior Producer with CBC Television's 'Foreign Assignment', remarked that the CBC's coverage of Latin America in the last five years has focused only on natural disasters and trade missions. The last mention of paramilitary activity or of humanitarian