

The UN, disarmament and Canadians

plete disarmament. In the Final Document of UNSSOD I the following priorities are set out:

1. Nuclear weapons.
2. Other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.
3. Reduction of armed forces.

While negotiations towards these ends have continued, agreement has only proved possible on the third one. A treaty, opened for signature in 1981, contains three protocols which provide for the banning of:

1. Incendiary attacks on cities and other areas of concentrated civilian population, even when they contain military targets.
2. Booby traps attached to the sick or wounded, food and drink, kitchen utensils or toys, and at grave sites and medical facilities.
3. Weapons that scatter fragments made of materials such as glass or plastic which do not show up on x-rays.

This is only a modest achievement. It is far from adequate in the eyes of anyone who wants to see arms controlled and reduced. The fact that this is all the world could agree to is one reason for the current public pressure on governments for the steps such as a freeze on the development, production and deployment of nuclear weapons.

However, the negotiations took place when the international scene featured such events as the invasion of Afghanistan, the American hostages in Tehran and the Solidarity crisis in Poland. It showed once again that agreements are still possible in times of tension.

Strategy of Suffocation

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau addressed UNSSOD I and put forward a "strategy of suffocation" for the nuclear arms race. He said his primary concern was the "technological impulse" behind the development of strategic weapons. The nuclear arms race, he argued, began in the laboratory and thus it was important to deprive it of the oxygen on which it fed. He proposed these four measures:

1. A comprehensive test ban to impede the further development of nuclear explosive devices.
2. An agreement to stop the flight-testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles.
3. An agreement to prohibit all production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons purposes.
4. An agreement to limit and then progressively to reduce military spending on new strategic nuclear weapons systems.

The Prime Minister has said this is still Canadian policy, but he could well tell UNSSOD II how disappointed he must be that nothing has been done. The negotiations among the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain for a comprehensive test ban (CTB) have dragged on, with verification the ostensible stumbling block. Canadian seismologists have shown that it is possible to distinguish between earthquakes and underground nuclear tests, except very small ones. The real reason for the lack of progress

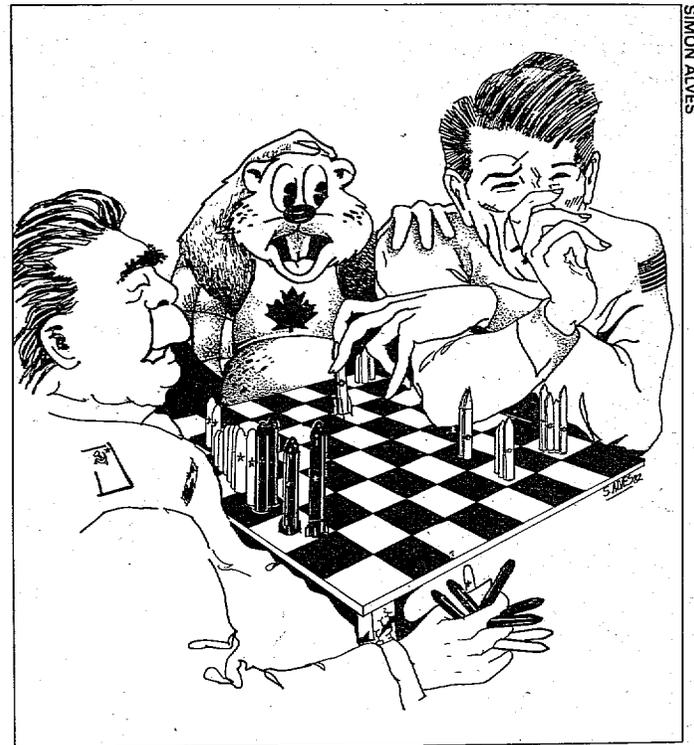
must surely be that the nuclear powers do not want to stop testing.

Flight testing came into the news in the spring with word that Canada had agreed, in principle, to let the United States carry out flight-tests of cruise missiles at Cold Lake, Alberta. This appeared to be in conflict with the strategy, but the official justification was that no "agreement" had yet been reached to stop flight-testing.

Canada has introduced resolutions in the General Assembly on ending production of fissionable materials, but there has been an apparent lack of interest among nuclear and non-nuclear nations alike. Nothing has been done to reduce military spending.

UNSSOD II

At the time the Prime Minister put forward these ideas, there seemed a real chance of progress in controlling the arms race. Since then, however, the second Strategic Arms Limitation Talks agreement (SALT II) has never been ratified, even though the two superpowers are both



behaving as if it were in effect. Détente has become a dirty word, and the Reagan administration has put emphasis on arms buildup rather than arms control.

Under these circumstances, there seems little prospect that any specific new agreements can be announced at UNSSOD II. At the same time, the general public in both North America and Europe has become increasingly restless at the lack of progress and is starting to put pressure on governments. This pressure has taken various forms. In Canada, many cities and towns will be voting in the next civic elections on a world referendum in favor of disarmament. In the United States, there are proposals for a freeze on the development, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and for a policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons.

If it is true that the prime objective of a government is