

University polls say 82 per cent refuse the cruise

Last week, another Cruise missile was tested in Canadian airspace. The ongoing tests are part of a commitment Canada made to the United States several years ago. However, the Canadian public, which had no say in granting the rights to test the offensive weapon system in Canada, does not seem to support continuing the tests. In the following Campus Press article, it is reported that eighty-six percent of Atlantic votes were against the testing. How does UPEI stand on this?

VANCOUVER (CUP) -
As an American cruise missile flew over Canada January 19, Canadian students and faculty conducted polls which found 82 per cent of the public objects to the weapons.

Carole O'Veirne, a fourth year bio-chemistry student at the University of Toronto, worked on the "REAL CRUISE TEST" an informal survey of 50 Canadian communities sponsored by the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign.

Respondents were asked: "Do you agree that Canada should stop testing the Cruise and start testing what it can do for world peace?"

Of 415 students polled at U of T, 305 or 73 per cent, voted to end cruise testing.

Nationally 82 per cent - or 9118 of the 11,088 respondents - were against the tests.

In the Atlantic region, 467 or 86 per cent were opposed.

"There was a general awareness of the issue," O'Veirne said of the U of T poll.

"I see cruise testing as an extension of American military strategy and do not think Canada should be any part of that," she added.

Organizers see the poll as part of the continuing trend against Cruise testing since 1983, when the Trudeau government first agreed to test the weapon, and Canadians were evenly divided on the issue.

On Canada's west coast, students from the Langara campus of Vancouver Com-

munity College helped organize a downtown protest.

James Fierheller, a second year English student, missed classes to speak at the rally of about 30 people.

"If you don't oppose the cruise missile straight forwardly, then it is going to be nagging at you, like a shadow in your subconscious," he said, a gloomy thought for those familiar with the weapons specifications.

When armed, the cruise carries a 200 kiloton warhead, with 15 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb. The weapon is only 6.3 metres long with a radar image "about the size of a seagull," and a theoretical accuracy of 100 metres after a 2400 kilometre flight.

Among faculty opposing the cruise was Vassos Hadzilacos, a computer science professor who helped organize the U of T poll.

"The Canadian government previously justified the test on the basis of wanting to make progress in the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) negotiation," said Hadzilacos.

But since Reagan and Gorbachev agreed in December to scrap medium range missiles, the Canadian government should honour its earlier statement and cancel cruise testing, he said.

The federal Liberal party now supports this view and called for an end to flights of the unarmed missile, even as it was being tested over the Northwest Territories, B.C. and Alberta.

The NDP also opposes the cruise.

The Conservative government, however, is now saying that testing the air-launched cruise-part of the independent U.S. arsenal should be continued to maintain "strategic stability," demonstrate "western unity," and balance Soviet cruise missiles.

Some students support this view.

"The states are our allies and they protect us - we should provide the ground for the cruise to be tested," said Karl Kottmeier, a second year History student at the University of British Columbia.

Kottmeier sees the cruise's pinpoint accuracy as a military asset, while others view it as destabilizing, encouraging plans for fighting a "limited" nuclear war.

Another factor in the debate on the cruise is its speed.

When Defence Minister, Perrin Beatty visited UBC last spring, he told students that the Cruise, a relatively slow flying weapon, would be used only for retaliatory purposes.

But students said they were worried that new generations of the missile, equipped with radar-evading 'stealth' technology and supersonic speed, would surely be first strike weapons, further destabilizing the fragile nuclear balance.

Time to ask the question. Do you favour testing of the Cruise missile, or do you think that we should help to end its testing and help work towards better relations between our neighbours to the north and to the south of us? Please take time to fill out a ballot and send it to us. Thank you for participating.

Do you agree that
cruise missile
is necessary?
No
Yes