

By Alan Snitow

NEW YORK, JUNE 20

WHEN WILL THERE BE AN end to the arms race through disarmament? "There's a lot of complexity to it," responds Ambassador Louis Fields, a U.S. delegate to the UN Second Special Session on Disarmament now underway in New York. "I have some disquietude about time frames and I would ascribe that as well to whether or not disarmament can be achieved in this century."

To his credit, Fields said he would not rule out disarmament by the year 2000 if "some miraculous thing occurred." However, President Ronald Reagan, in a speech at the UN, made it clear that the upcoming U.S.-Soviet strategic arms negotiations—the START talks—are not likely to be the miraculous "something" that will "convince us of Soviet sincerity."

For those who marched into Central Park on June 12 (see story page 12) the 800,000-strong throng was something miraculous. But the massive event at the UN seemed, if anything, to have less impact on the U.S. stance and rhetoric than earlier and smaller European demonstrations.

"No Surprises," headlined the *Disarmament Times*, the peace movement's daily publication at the special session, the day after Reagan's speech. The newspaper called it "a speech marked by the absence of any substantive new proposals," while other disarmament advocates were less kind, calling his proposals "non-starters" or "booby traps."

"President Reagan was contemptuous of the peace movement," said Robert Johansen, president of the Institute for World Order. In their "arrogance of power," he continued, "Reagan and his team did not feel it was necessary to provide a conciliatory speech" for either the Soviets or the peace marchers.

Indeed, Johansen said he was surprised that the Soviets didn't walk out after being peppered with rhetorical shots.

The peace movement itself merited no attention as a significant force. It was mentioned only in the context of "...the Soviet Union is trying to manipulate the peace movement in the West."

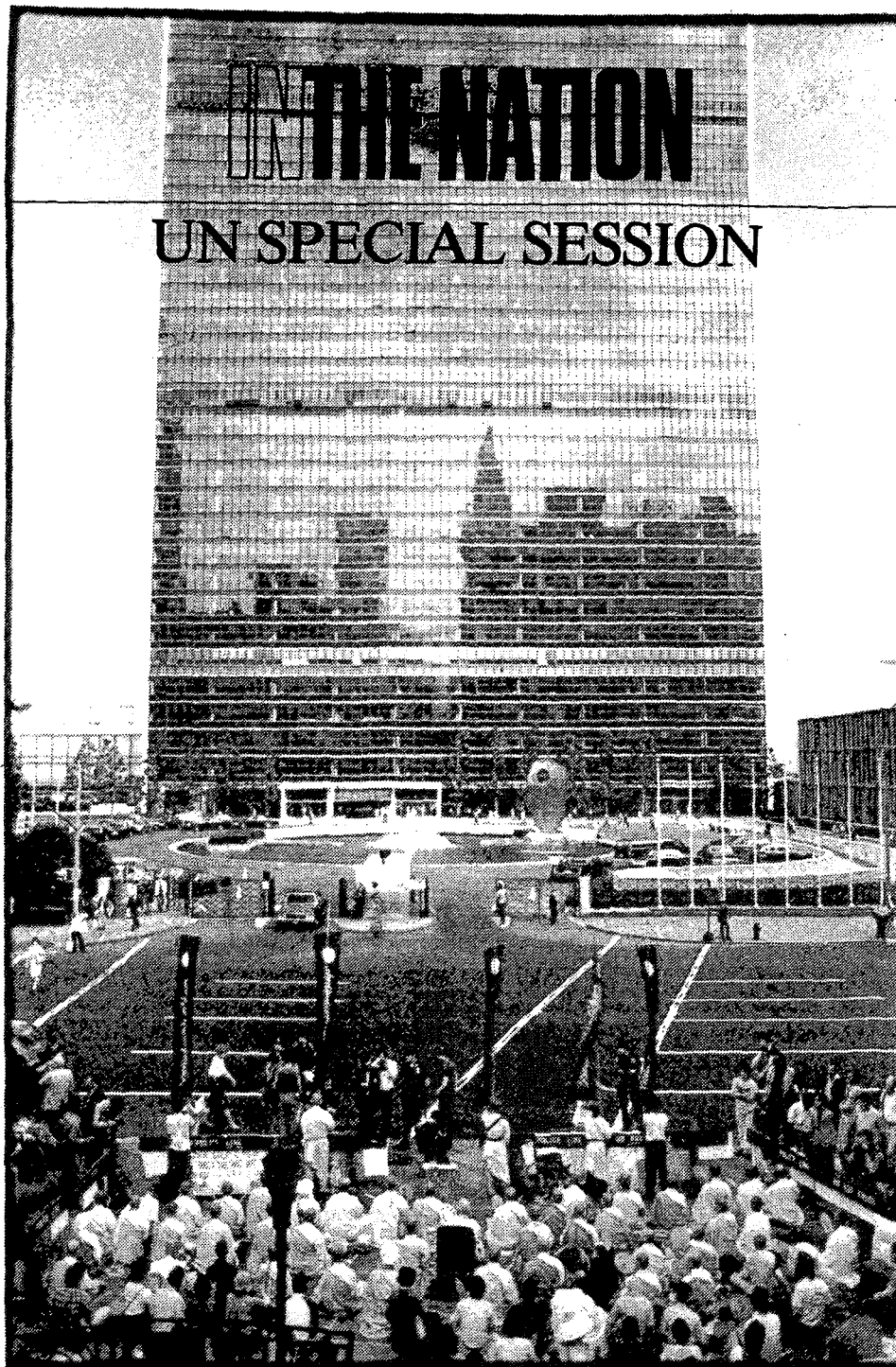
For those who are observing and analyzing the process at the UN Special Session, there is an additional constituency to be considered—the representatives of more than 150 countries, many of them so small that maintaining a UN delegation is a considerable sacrifice and commitment. Reagan's message to those delegates could not be called encouraging; even though Alex Liebowitz, a member of the U.S. Mission to the UN, said the president's attendance "demonstrates that we take the UN seriously."

The large majority of non-aligned and non-nuclear nations represented at the Special Session want just that: to be taken seriously by the major powers. They want to play some role in the disarmament process, to be consulted and, most of all, respected. But when Reagan spoke before the General Assembly, the delegates did not miss the fact that the speech was aimed more at staving off the growth of the peace movement in Peoria than it was at responding to their concerns about the arms race.

Perhaps the most telling moment came just after Reagan's speech when delegates crowded around the podium to examine the newest model in presidential teleprompters. Unlike previous speakers, Reagan read his speech without looking down at a text. Television viewers across the country saw him appear to be looking at the delegates as he delivered a tough, earnest, seemingly off-the-cuff statement that lasted 26 minutes, leaving just enough time for a quick network wrap-up and a commercial.

But gadgetry alone no longer wows the Third World.

All other major speeches have been read without the benefit of the teleprompter, and they have been considerably longer than 26 minutes. Although TV-trained Americans may blanch at the thought of listening to a halting translation of Soviet



Soviets score a diplomatic coup

foreign minister Andrei Gromyko's oration explaining his country's position on disarmament, the UN delegates sat through and saw through a different message from the Soviet Union: They were being treated without condescension by one of the superpowers.

Although there was no major breakthrough in Gromyko's speech, the Soviet foreign minister did indicate a softening of his country's opposition to on-site verification, a past obstacle in negotiations—particularly over chemical weap-

ons. He indicated that the Soviet Union would be willing to open some of its nuclear reactors and research facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency, something neither superpower permits at this point.

Winning the gesture war.

The big diplomatic coup came from Leonid Brezhnev himself in a letter read by Gromyko. Before the multitude of non-aligned and non-nuclear states, the Soviet Union swore a solemn oath "not to

be the first to use nuclear weapons." The move was "unilateral," said the foreign minister, and "becomes effective at the moment it is made public from the rostrum of the General Assembly."

For the first and last time so far in the session, a speaker's statement was interrupted by applause from the delegates. In an organization built on protocol, on gestures and on words, the Soviet Union is winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the delegates without even a fight.

On the contrary, Reagan's speech—while appealing to some fanciful Middle American beliefs—dismissed the UN process as frivolous. The only response to Brezhnev's no first-use pledge was in direct: "We need deeds, not words." But the UN, when it is successful, is so because it substitutes words for deeds of war.

"Simply collecting agreements," Reagan said, "will not bring peace."

Such statements are not likely to boost sagging morale here at the Special Session. In spite of the size and message of the June 12 march, the delegates are isolated in their own world. They are trying to write by consensus a document that outlines a "comprehensive program for disarmament" even as one of the leading nuclear states is saying in public briefings that disarmament won't happen in this century.

After a hundred speakers, including dozens of presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers, the final result could be a stalemate—a session unable to arrive at even a statement of principles for disarmament. This would be a resounding silence from the world body.

At best, the more hopeful people at the UN think the session will come up with just another well-phrased, idealistic final document that is observed only in the breach of its intent and of its every provision. That has already been the fate of the much-honored, but little respected "final document" of the First Disarmament Session in 1978. One way or the other, the reward for the delegates' diligence is likely to be a decade of occasional briefings about the most secret strategic arms talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

When those secret bilateral talks begin at the end of June, the peace movement in the U.S. and Western Europe will have a more difficult time "keeping its eye on the target" as Reagan appeals for unity and promises eventual results.

"For 30 years," said Robert Johansen, "we had governments claim that they were doing all they could to reduce arms without a single weapon being dismantled as a result of negotiations. If we want peace, we must never take government statements at face value."

Alan Snitow is chair of the West Coast advisory board of *In These Times*.

Above, Buddhist monks from Japan gather in front of the UN. Below, New York police remove a demonstrator from a sit-in at the U.S. Mission to the UN.



RADIO MARTI

Playing politics with the airwaves, Cold War style

By Pat Aufderheide

THE IDEA OF A GOVERNMENT-run station to broadcast news about Cuba to Cubans—named, with unperceived irony, Radio Marti after the Cuban poet-martyr who called the U.S. “the belly of the [imperial] beast”—has had a faintly fantastic air to it since it was proposed almost a year ago.

The ironies were a little too sharp. Here was an expensive new item—more than \$17 million for the first 18 months—at a time of brutal slashes in the social “safety net.” Further, many argued, the station’s services were unnecessary. After all, Cuba picks up commercial radio stations’ signals—stations that carry not only news but the latest popular music and constant natural advertisements for the American way of life. If that weren’t enough, Cuba also gets Voice of America Spanish-language programming via a Florida transmitter station, Radio Marathon.

So why have administration, State and Defense Department (DOD) officials fought so hard for Radio Marti in the face of congressional reservations, even among staunch Republicans?

In the latest round of congressional jockeying to block funding for Radio Marti, a possible explanation has surfaced. And the explanation looks faintly more fantastic than the proposal itself. Foreign policy Cold Warriors may be looking for an excuse to physically attack Cuba. Perhaps they hope that once Radio Marti is set up on an AM frequency at 1040, Cuba will make good its threat to jam the frequency with massive power. This could be interpreted as an act of war—grounds to destroy the jamming facility on the island. This theory doesn’t come from conspiracy mongers lurking left-of-center in the Washington shadows. It comes from outraged Midwestern broadcasters and members of Congress whose patience has about worn out.

The theory surfaced when executives from Palmer Broadcasting, which owns the coast-to-coast clear channel AM radio station WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, noticed that Radio Marti was slotted for WHO’s frequency, 1040. Marti’s pipsqueak signal wouldn’t be a problem for WHO, which operates at 50 kilowatts, the maximum power the FCC allows in the continental U.S. But if Cuba proceeded to build—as it claims it will—a 500 kilowatt station that would jam the signal, WHO would shrink down to a pipsqueak station itself.

Robert Harter, the station owner, was understandably upset.

So the Palmer Broadcasting people descended on Washington, where they met with their legislators, State and Defense department officials and some representatives from the Presidential Commission on Broadcasting to Cuba. Early on, Harter talked with Kenneth Geddings, an unofficial consultant to the Commission. Harter says that Geddings, a major media owner in Mobile, Ala., and an ex-director of the Voice of America, told him that the jamming of Radio Marti might be considered an act of war.

When Palmer vice-president Robert Engelhardt and the station’s attorney Ken Salomon met with DOD official James R. Duncan at the Pentagon, they heard the same story. More, they claim, he suggested that the broadcasters stop worrying about the jamming and let the

government act “as your point man”—i.e. run interference, or handle Cuba on the jamming question. They also say Duncan claimed that jamming the signal would warrant a “surgical” removal of the jammer. Duncan, however, now denies he used the word “surgical” in that conversation, only saying that Cuban jamming would be regarded as an “unfriendly act,” and that “a variety of options would be available to us.”

The problem of interference between Cuban and U.S. radio signals is longstanding, and if Florida broadcasters have been loud in their protests, so have been the Cubans. The problem is bound to get worse as Cuba continues to strengthen its radio capacity. But governmental negotiations keep breaking down, most recently in November at international telecommunications talks in Rio de Janeiro. The U.S. arrived with intractable negotiating terms and the Cubans walked out in frustration before the conference ended. At that time, other foreign delegates to the conference criticized the U.S. for negotiating in bad faith. U.S. representatives claimed they had not expected much to happen.

One of the negotiating sessions offers clues that bolster WHO executives’ interpretation of the secret agenda behind

Radio Marti.

Last August Cuban delegates told U.S. representatives that they intended to build two 500-kilowatt stations on the AM 1040 and 1160 frequencies. Only after that announcement did the FCC recommend the 1040 frequency to Radio Marti. Whether the FCC chose it on its own or at the request of an interagency government task force depends on which agency you talk to. This January, the National Telecommunications Information agency assigned AM 1040 to Radio Marti. (On June 14, Assistant Secretary of State for interAmerican affairs Thomas Enders sent a letter confirming this sequence of events to Sen. Charles Percy [R-Ill.], whose Foreign Affairs committee looks at the Marti proposal in July.)

“They chose a frequency that cannot possibly work,” said Salomon. “You have to ask yourself why. Maybe they’re doing it to provoke a response.”

WHO representatives took their protest to legislators. Congressman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) didn’t take much persuading. He had already gone on record calling Marti one of the “most imaginative ways to waste money” proposed by the administration and a pet project of “right-wing activists.” He was instrumental in sending the House bill authorizing Radio Marti into the Energy and Commerce Committee, where it slid into Timothy Wirth’s (D-Colo.) telecommunications subcommittee. Wirth, who has pushed hard to protect public radio and TV from budget cutbacks, is no fonder of Marti than Harkin is. He questioned the funding of Marti at a time when administration officials “are unwilling to spend even one penny to build public radio facilities in the U.S., which bring news and information to the American public.”

On Wirth’s turf, a deceptively simple amendment was proposed. Thomas Tauke (R-Ia.) and Al Swift (D-Wash.) proposed limiting Marti to a governmental frequency, which would automatically

turn it into a shortwave radio station and get it off WHO’s or any other AM station’s territory. The amendment passed enthusiastically.

State and DOD supporters of Marti are dismayed. “It would torpedo the project,” said Yale Newman, a member of the Commission and would-be program director of the new station. “There are very few short wave radio receivers in Cuba.” Newman and others are now hard at work lobbying Energy and Commerce committee members, trying to make the case that funding a Cuban parallel to Radio Free Europe is really a top priority.

Direct action.

But despite State Department official Miles Frechette’s earlier assurances to Congress, Radio Marti enthusiasts may not wait for congressional approval to start work on the station. On June 7 *Broadcasting* magazine announced that the Navy was building several radio towers just off Florida. The owners just happened to fit the specification of Radio Marti. The news promptly raised hackles both in private industry and in Congress, where Wirth among others made statements of protest and met with Defense Department officials.

The construction pleases some members of the Commission. “It would be an option for us,” Newman said of the \$1-million worth of towers, “if Con-

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The military may not wait for Congress to approve “Radio Free Cuba.”

NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

Look left among Democrats

By John Judis

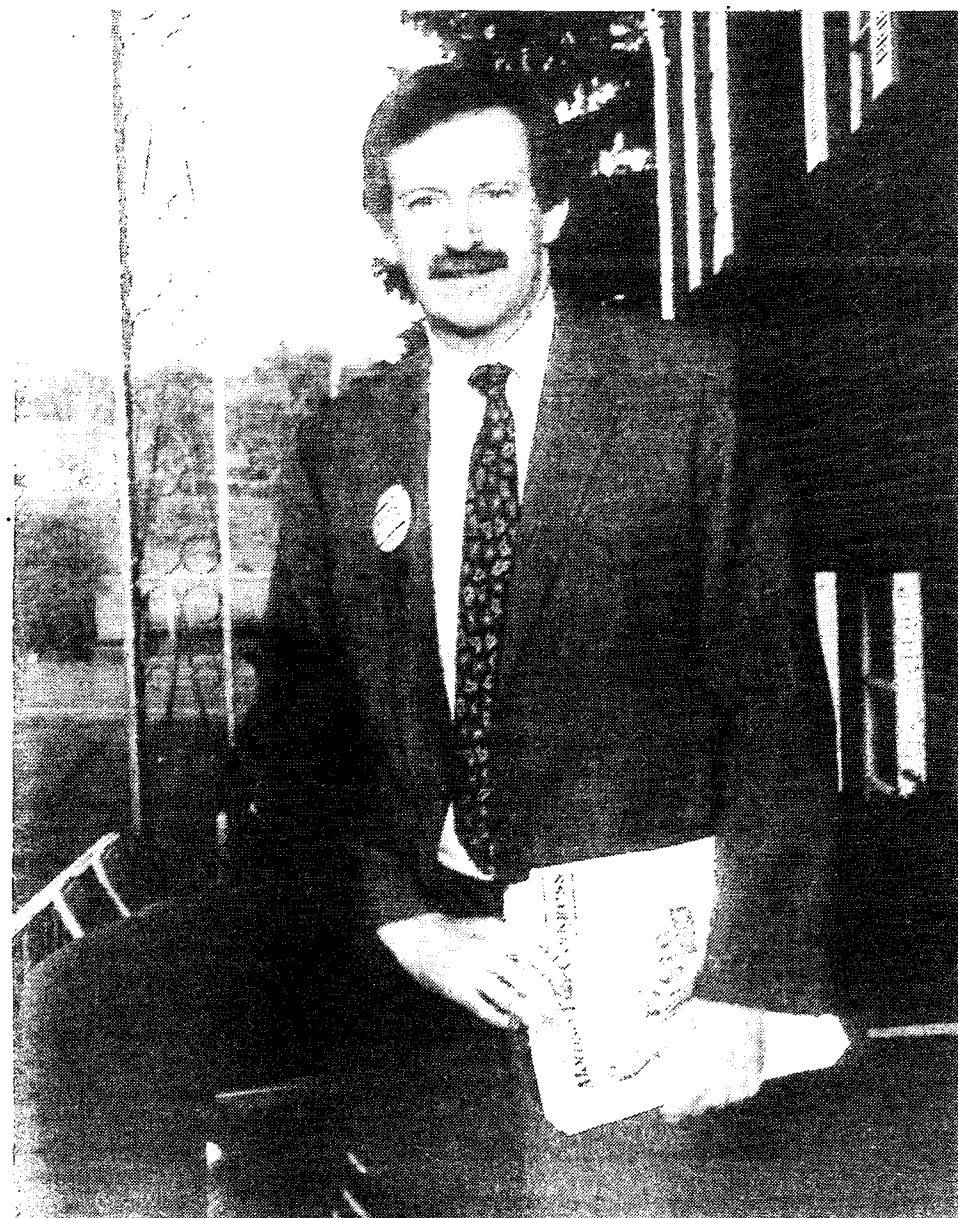
NEW HAVEN, CT

JUST AS THE EXHAUSTION of postwar economic and foreign policy stimulated the supply-side fad among Republicans, it is encouraging a new politics among some Democrats.

Its practitioners call themselves “progressives.” They stress the need for economic planning rather than free market initiatives. They are skeptical of rising military budgets. They think America’s foreign policy should be based on the promulgations of its own democratic ideals. They find their support among left-leaning unions like the Machinists and among environmental, feminist and minority organizations. They tend to be from the industrial East, the Midwest or the Pacific coast. And they probably supported Senator Edward Kennedy rather than President Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential primaries.

In the Democratic class of 1980, the most prominent of this new breed was Boston’s Barney Frank, who because of redistricting faces an uphill battle this year against fellow incumbent Margaret Heckler, a GOP moderate. (In spite of her differences with Reaganism, the Republican National Committee has accorded Heckler’s race its second highest priority among House contests.)

Among the newcomers in 1982, several candidates stand out. Lane Evans, a young lawyer who won the Democratic primary in the Rock Island, Ill., House district, will face State Sen. Ken McMillen in the fall. McMillen upset incumbent Republican Tom Railsback in the April primary with the help of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC). Bill Curry, a former



Naderite and aide to Rep. Toby Moffett, will try to fill Moffett’s Hartford House seat. (Moffett is running for Senate.) And

Bruce Morrison hopes to win the right in the September Connecticut Democratic primary to face incumbent Republican Larry DeNardis in November.

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