

Beating emotional drums

This week the Toronto *Star* printed a leaked government survey that, it was claimed, showed the prime foreign-policy concerns of Canadians were "peace" and "world hunger." Not surprisingly, the *Star* claimed that Mulroney's push toward free trade did not answer the wants and needs of Canadians.

A most revealing and disturbing episode. First, it shows the danger of government by polls. The government, the media, or a combination of both, generally shape public opinion. The *Star*, for example, has been blasting the idea of free trade for months. The government takes a poll and finds many people, among them a lot of *Star* readers, opposed to free trade. Shrieking like a spinster before a mouse, Ottawa retreats in panic.

Why bother to take polls? Ottawa could save a lot of time and money by just calling up the *Star* and asking it for today's party line. Policy by polls is so dangerous because it reflects little more than yesterday's newspaper headlines.

Next, the point that Canadians seem to think peace and hunger should be our primary concerns. Here we see the product of 16 years of Liberal brainwashing. Trudeau and his leftist ideologues made a mighty and apparently quite successful effort to convince Canadians that "peace" was a foreign policy.

This is, of course, arrant nonsense. Nations that lack the capability to make war cannot make peace. Having disarmed Canada and ruined its once-sound economy, Trudeau managed to make Canada into a foreign-policy neuter. Sending scads of bureaucrats to Third World jamborees has nothing to do with the reality of power politics or achieving peace.

There is no such thing as a policy of "peace." Supporting peace is like backing sunshine or air. Canada's contribution of a few troops to the UN is nice but we should recall that as an expression of the foreign policy of the world's 10th economic

ERIC MARGOLIS



power, it ranks right up there with Fiji in terms of real value.

All of the hot air and bombast about "peace" simply allowed Trudeau to disarm Canada and devote the money saved to socialist programs. It made Canada entirely dependent for defence on the U.S. and caused Canada to be reviled by its NATO partners as a "shirker." Viewed from abroad, our beatitude of peace produced little more than disdain and scorn.

But Canadians have been so propagandized by Trudeau and the *Star* that they still think the will-o'-the-wisp of "peace" means something more than an excuse for politicians to take foreign junkets. A recent poll found the horrifying results that a sizeable portion of the public believed that UN peace-keeping was the prime role of our armed forces. It's incredible to think that our people have been so deluded that they no longer realize that our most vital priority is national security. That is why we have governments, not for making movies about flowers or dishing out money to black despots in Africa.

Ah, yes, we must fight world hunger — and this means starving Africa. But Africa is starving because of the criminal negligence and stupidity of its leaders, not because of acts of nature. According to a 1979 U.S. AID study, Africa's now vacant farmland, if tilled, could feed *all* of Africa and *all* of Europe. Even present land under cultivation, if properly managed, could produce 130 times what it does today.

Thus the real problem of hunger is not lack of food but lack of organization and the widespread imposition in Africa — often with Canadian aid — of socialism and agricultural collectivization. Shipping more handouts of food and money to Africa's wretched governments will only accentuate these problems. We are well on the way to making Africa a permanent welfare mother.

It is, however, much easier to beat the emotional drums by showing pictures of starving black babies than having to face the real problems that cause hunger. The foreign-policy question here is not hunger but the appropriateness of our aid programs and the correct recipients.

But helping solve problems of irrigation or food distribution in Malawi does not earn votes in Manitoba. Saving the world from "hunger" by perpetuating the systems that cause it does, sadly, play well to the viewers.

So what we have here is not policy but theatre, and not very good theatre at that. Empty slogans, cheap sets, and a tawdry script, a cast of charlatans living high on the public purse.

This is the foreign-policy script left to us by the Great Internationalist Pierre Trudeau who cared so deeply about Africa's starving from the comfort of his private jet.



"You're a man of the world, Miss Wallis. Tell me, what are sexist remarks really like?"