

Canada's Peace and Security Agenda: A Seminar Report

On February 8 and 9, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall hosted a seminar on the topic "Canada's Agenda for International Peace and Security." Forty-nine participants, representing non-governmental organizations, academia, business, labour, government and Parliament, attended the session, which was held in Ottawa.

Disarmament Bulletin 20 included excerpts from Mrs. McDougall's address to the seminar. The following are excerpts from the seminar report prepared by Alex Morrison, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.

If there was one theme that emerged as a result of the discussions it was that there is being forged in Canada a new peace-keeping coalition composed of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Department of National Defence, other interested government agencies including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Elections Canada, and a wide variety of non-governmental organizations and interested citizens.

It was apparent that the scope, intensity and frequency of peacekeeping activities carried out around the world by representatives of Canada are much greater than many had realized prior to the seminar.

It was generally argued that a more comprehensive public education and information program ought to be instituted and maintained on a wide scale, not only to ensure that Canadians are aware of the Canadian contribution to international peace, security and stability, but also to foster a continuing and informed discussion...

State of the Post-Cold War World

Participants generally agreed that the world has not entered the period of peace, harmony and tranquillity that we were expected to enjoy at the end of the Cold War. All segments of Canadian society must be involved in a national discussion to determine how to respond effectively to the new challenges. It is clear that the nationality, religious and ethnic differences kept in check during the Cold War have now burst through the surface. Once the



A Canadian with the Unified Task Force in Somalia (UNITAF).

Canadian Forces photo

current situations in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia are resolved, however that comes about, it is certain that United Nations resources will be required in many other areas of the world.

Definition of Peacekeeping

It was acknowledged that, until recently, the single term "peacekeeping" has served to cover a multiplicity of United Nations activities. However, the recent dramatic increase in the types and numbers of peacekeeping operations has given rise to the more frequent use of such terms as peacemaking, peacebuilding, peace-enforcement, peace-restoration and peace-establishment.

There are those who hold that each of these terms ought to be defined precisely and related to a spectrum of action. Others, trying to avoid a definitional morass, believe that peacekeeping has such a positive reputation that it ought to be the only term used. The latter group uses the illustration of a "peacekeeping umbrella," under which stand missions ranging from an observer type, through the classic interpositional model of Cyprus, all the way to operations such as those in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia. The umbrella also

covers an expanding range of tasks, including those of an environmental, anti-crime or maritime nature.

Some participants expressed the need for a philosophical, intellectual and conceptual framework to be used in determining and refining future approaches. The "aggression-anarchy" spectrum could be a starting point.

Public Education

The seminar itself was a good indication of the wide range of Canadians — individuals and organizations — that ought to be involved in determining the future foreign policy direction of peacekeeping. Parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, academics and research institutions all have a vital role to play.

While Canadians take great pride in our country's peacekeeping record, the details and extent of our participation are unknown to many. A comprehensive program of informational materials is needed. Canadians ought to be better informed of the peacekeeping activities carried out not only by the professional men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces, but also by humanitarian organizations, Elections Canada and the RCMP.