

the Group of 77 as expressed in the New International Economic Order and its emphasis on the progressive development of self-reliant countries that could enter the global economy on terms favourable to themselves. At the UN Food Conference in Rome, they presented a challenge to official Government policy that could not be ignored because of their capacity to mobilize effectively and quickly public support back home. Likewise, interest groups themselves claim that they have had a profound influence on *Habitat* and on the cancellation of the proposed 1975 UN Crime Conference in Toronto.

The new Canadian South African trade policy is but one example of how combined letter-writing and interest-group pressure has had an influence on the policy-makers. For some time now, the Department has found it increasingly difficult to justify before religious and pressure groups the use of Canadian tax dollars for the promotion of trade and industry with a country whose policy of *apartheid* it publicly condemns. Canadian policy in South Africa was the subject of 132 written representations in 1976 and 256 in 1977. If it had not been for these, along with press and parliamentary demands for a change in policy, it is doubtful that the issue of a policy change would have been raised by External Affairs, and even now the strength and

implementation of the proposed changes may rest in the balance, for that elusive public, and equally elusive opinion, are split between the churches and humanitarian groups, on the one hand, and, on the other, those persons who are concerned about the economic impact on Canada and those who fear Communist domination of southern Africa.

Although the recent Sadat-Begin-Dayan efforts at wooing selected American publics prove that public diplomacy is very much alive, public opinion cannot be isolated or given any pre-eminence among the decision-making factors. Neither the departmental files nor the testimony of any two policy-makers dealing with the same subject can yield much evidence for the existence of any consistent empirical relation between public opinion and the behaviour of governments. Furthermore, the variations simply defy the best efforts of the model-builders on policy-formulation. Pressures and constraints emanating from external and organizational environments have their countervailing influences, as do other domestic considerations such as inflation and jurisdiction. Yet Canadian policy-makers, by virtue of their political connections if not their democratic heritage, spend considerable time and money ascertaining what the public wants or can be educated to accept. While it may not always be easy for

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### Examples of written policy-related representations to External Affairs in 1977

	JAN FEB	MARCH APRIL	MAY JUNE	JULY AUG	SEPT OCT	NOV DEC	TOTAL
Arms embargo against South Africa	70	59	12	3	1	1	134
Death of Anna Mae Aquash	38	11	1	0	0	0	50
Law of the sea and 200-mile limit	35	7	2	2	2	0	48
Canada's policy on Arab boycott	71	50	4	0	0	0	125
Maritime boundaries	2	2	6	8	0	0	18
Garrison Diversion	17	3	0	2	0	0	22
Cultural affairs	33	48	25	0	43	39	188
Objection to Canadian assistance to Cuba	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Steve Biko	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
Urge Canada to press UN enquiry into Ugandan affairs	0	67	13	0	0	0	80
Support for Canadian call for Uganda enquiry	0	184	6	0	0	0	190