

S I G N P O S T S

OTTAWA — Bill C-10, a measure to write off a total of \$672.25 million in debts owed by 13 African nations is being cleared through Parliament with minimal debate. Cameroon and Kenya account respectively for \$143.7 million and \$109.0 million. The others, in millions, are Zambia \$86.8, Ivory Coast \$80.0, Ghana \$77.6, Nigeria \$42.4, Zaire \$31.3, Zimbabwe \$30.8, Madagascar \$22.9, Congo \$22.6, Senegal \$16.8, Gabon \$7.6 and Swaziland \$1.37.

TOKYO — Barry Steers, Canada's Ambassador to Japan for the last eight years, is retiring from the public sector. His successor is James Taylor, currently Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, whose 28-year career focus on Atlantic relations will now be capped by new ventures in the Pacific Rim.

OTTAWA — Canada's Ambassador to Washington, Derek Burney, suggests that Canada can ill afford to relax in its trade dealings with the United States, even after the Free Trade Agreement is fully in effect. Addressing the recent Canadian Exporters' Association annual meeting, he pointed out that "many Americans see the world as playing unfairly on trade" and there is an "increasingly strained and uncertain" environment because of this perception. Protectionism is seen increasingly as a fast fix. Accordingly, Canada must continue to exercise "vigour, discipline and commitment" in trade dealings with the U.S.

OTTAWA — In what is becoming traditional for visiting heads of state, King Hussein of Jordan addressed a joint meeting of the House of Commons and Senate during his recent official visit. The focus of his 20-minute speech, as expected, was his appeal for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. Prime Minister Mulroney capped the Jordanian monarch's visit with an announcement that Canada will provide more than \$17.5 million worth of economic and development assistance to Jordan over the next two years, mainly for the petroleum sector.

LOS ANGELES — Calling on other western nations to follow suit if they truly support democratic reform in the East Bloc, Prime Minister Mulroney has announced an unprecedented aid package for Poland and Hungary unveiled during an October 12 speech to the World Affairs Council. It will encompass a grant of \$12 million in food aid for Poland as well as the creation of a \$10 million Economic Development Fund that will "support reforms in the private sector in Poland and Hungary through provision of technical and managerial assistance." The remaining \$20 million would be provided through a short-term credit insurance or guarantee facility that would enable Poland to meet urgent import requirements from Canadian suppliers. "Canada believes that aid to Eastern Europe should flow now," he said. "Combined western assistance could be the key to substantial and beneficial change in Eastern Europe."

MAINZ — John Halstead, Canadian Ambassador to Bonn 1975-80, permanent representative of Canada at NATO 1980-82, and now visiting professor at Carleton University and the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. became the first recipient of a new prestigious German peace prize. Awarded by the Association of German War Veterans, the distinction recognizes Ambassador Halstead's outstanding contribution to Atlantic diplomacy and Canadian-German relations.

NEW YORK — The creation of a 625-person UN border monitoring force for Central America (ONUCA) on November 5 represents a step forward in controlling the most serious conflict in the Western Hemisphere, and it will involve Canada directly in yet another major UN peace-keeping activity. It is the first time that Washington has agreed to a UN (as opposed to OAS, or unilateral) force in this closely watched security zone — the clearest signal yet that the Bush administration considers the *contra* a spent military instrument that no longer serves US objectives. All Central American governments support its disbanding in accordance with the Tela Accords of August 1989.

Ottawa — Japanese fishing practices and a lumber import tax that annoys Canada were the main points of discussion when Prime Minister Mulroney played host recently to Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu. Senior Canadian officials at the talks said Mr. Mulroney warned "politely but firmly" that Canada expects Japan to stop using drift nets in the Pacific. Taiwan and South Korea also have been criticized for their use and any move by Japan could set an example for the others.

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