

view of the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery. The Minister reaffirmed Canada's long-term commitment to Africa and added that the debt burden, overpopulation and environmental degradation were among the most pressing issues which required attention. In 1987-88, Canada provided \$1.1 billion in assistance to Africa via bilateral and multilateral channels and Canada forgave approximately \$600 million in Overseas Development Assistance debts of sub-Saharan African countries. Mrs. Landry stated that Canada was increasing to 45 per cent the share of its bilateral assistance committed to Africa (*External Affairs News Release*, September 12).

#### **Disarmament**

Canada's Ambassador Doug Roche was elected Chairman of the First Committee of the 43rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The First Committee deals with disarmament and related international security questions, and was to be in session from September 20 until the end of November. This was the second time in the history of the United Nations that a Canadian had assumed this position. The first Canadian to do so was Lester B. Pearson in 1949 (*External Affairs News Release*, September 20).

#### **Peacekeeping**

Canada agreed to participate in the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). The Force was established to assist in the implementation of a cease-fire agreement, a vital first step in efforts to end the 8-year Iran-Iraq war. Canada contributed a fully self-sustained communications unit which was responsible for all of the Observer Force's communication requirements along the entire 1,200 kilometer border between Iran and Iraq. In addition to this communication unit, which comprised approximately 370 Canadian Forces personnel, Canada had agreed to provide fifteen officers to assist at UNIIMOG Headquarters and in observer positions (*Government of Canada News Release*, August 9).

The Minister of National Defence, Perrin Beatty, sought support through a motion in the Commons for Canadian participation the United Nations Iran/Iraq Military Observers Group (UNIIMOG) and hoped that Canada's contribution to this international initiative would "help to end a war that has cost a million lives." He reminded the Commons that the peaceful settlement of disputes was one of the "three pillars of Canadian security policy." Charles Caccia (Lib., Davenport) told the House that the Official Opposition supported the Canadian participation in this "fine initiative." The New Democratic Party's Defence critic, Derek Blackburn (Brant) said his party was "totally in agreement" with the move the government had made. He added that "Canadians do not want their Government to choose sides and heighten international conflict. They want Canada to be the honest broker working for international peace (*Hansard*, August 24).

The *Financial Post* in an editorial on September 1 responded to the critics of the decision to contribute Canadian forces to the United Nations peacekeeping contingent in Iran and Iraq. It asked that "beyond the geopolitical dimension of the war, how could any country that professes belief in world peace and stability through membership in the UN refuse to participate in a mission designed to end an armed conflict?"

#### **Prime Minister Mulroney**

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney addressed the General Assembly on September 29. He praised the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Agreement as "an historic first step in arms reduction", but the Prime Minister observed that "The vicious cycle of repression and violence is unbroken in South Africa." He said there was "growing support for a properly structured international conference" to resolve the Middle East conflict. Mr. Mulroney paid tribute to the world body's peacekeepers and concluded that those who had doubted both the value of multilateralism and the UN "surely must be re-assessing their views today" (*Office of the Prime Minister Notes for an address*, September 29).