

REPORT FROM THE HILL



Foreign Policy Priorities

■ In a speech on 10 December, the Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall outlined three major foreign policy priorities for Canada in the 1990s: strengthening cooperative security, creating sustainable prosperity, and securing democracy and respect for human values.

As defined by the Minister, strengthening cooperative security refers to the desirability of establishing a more cooperative world order based on the rule of law, especially through a stronger UN. Sustainable prosperity means sustaining a high standard of living through improved productivity, an attractive investment environment for industries of the future, and secure access to international markets through international trade negotiations. Securing democracy and respect for human values involves the encouraging of respect for human rights, the rule of law, democratic principles and sound government.

McDougall's Travels

■ The Minister visited Kiev, Moscow and Prague for a series of important meetings at the end of January. In Kiev, she held talks with Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and signed a declaration formally establishing diplomatic relations between Canada and the Ukraine, as well as upgrading the status of Canada's consulate general in Kiev to that of an embassy.

From Kiev, McDougall travelled to Moscow where she led the Canadian delegation to the multilateral round of the Middle East peace negotiations, 28 and 29 January. The meeting established five international working groups on key issues affecting the Middle East: arms control, environment, economic development, water shar-

ing, and refugees. Ms. McDougall agreed that Canada would chair the working group on refugees, which is first expected to meet in Ottawa in late April or early May.

Finally, the Minister was in Prague to attend the second meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In her speech to the Council, she stressed Canada's concern about nuclear non-proliferation and conventional arms transfers. A decision was taken by the Council to admit ten new republics, most of them in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus region, of the former Soviet Union.

MPs in China

■ Earlier in January, three Members of Parliament found themselves embroiled in controversy during a visit to the People's Republic of China. The privately-sponsored trip, organized by Chinese-Canadian advocacy groups which have flourished since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Peking, involved NDP External Affairs critic Svend Robinson (Burnaby-Kingsway), Conservative Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth), and Liberal Beryl Gaffney (Nepean). During their visit, the MPs had aggressively pursued human rights abuses with an itinerary which included visits with the families of dissidents and a request to visit a normally off-limits Beijing jail holding many prominent political prisoners.

On 6 January, however, the MPs' van was surrounded by about one hundred armed police officers and soldiers who escorted them to the airport and forced them to board a plane bound for Hong Kong. External Affairs Minister McDougall denounced the expulsions as an "affront to the institution of Parliament."

Peacekeeping Force in Trouble

■ A report of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate released on 5 Febru-

ary condemned the United Nations for failing to respond to ceasefire violations and threats by Moroccan forces to fire on unarmed British, American, Canadian and other officers acting as UN military observers in Western Sahara. It suggested that the peacekeeping operation was in jeopardy because of mismanagement and possible financial irregularities. It also stated that the peacekeepers' military commander, General Armand Roy of Canada, was on the verge of recommending that Canada withdraw its military contingent. This was subsequently denied by the Department of National Defence, but it was clear that substantial difficulties persist.

Activity in the Commons

■ The House of Commons resumed sitting on 3 February, following its Christmas break. In February, the Commons Committee on External Affairs and International Trade opened a series of four weekly panel sessions on the new republics of the former Soviet Union and Canadian relations with them.

The Commons Defence Committee visited Europe from 29 January through 12 February to examine Canada's security role on the continent. The Committee, chaired by Arnold Malone (Crowfoot), held hearings on the issue before the Christmas break. It travelled to Moscow, Prague, Vienna, Berlin and Brussels.

In early December, the chair of the Commons Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, John Bosley (Don Valley West), spoke at a conference held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, organized by the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security and the Institute for International Affairs, Prague. The conference was held to discuss and evaluate the future role of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and its various processes and mechanisms. Mr. Bosley reminded the participants of Canada's founding role in

the CSCE and of the government's commitment to its continued growth and evolution.

Budget Fallout

■ On 25 February, Don Mazankowski tabled his first budget since becoming Minister of Finance. The government's determination to fight Canada's deficit without raising taxes had important implications for a number of organizations, including the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security. In an effort to "streamline" certain governmental operations, a total of forty-six agencies, boards, commissions or corporations were eliminated, consolidated, deferred or privatized. Among those eliminated were CIIPS, the Economic Council of Canada, the Science Council of Canada, and the Law Reform Commission, all with headquarters in Ottawa, and the International Centre for Ocean Development in Halifax.

Bernard Wood, CIIPS Chief Executive Officer, told a 2 March press conference that the Institute would continue to exist until Parliament passed legislation to dismantle it. The Institute was created by an act of Parliament in 1984. However, Wood also said that the Institute's management must take into account "the unequivocal intention of the Government to wind up the Institute and to 'transfer the necessary continuing resources to the Department of External Affairs.'"

Another significant change announced in the budget was to advance the planned withdrawal of Canadian troops from Europe, and to end plans for Canadian involvement in a task force stationed in Europe. Although Canada remains committed to sending a brigade back to Europe in an emergency, the Finance Minister predicted that these and other changes would cut defence spending by a total of \$2.2 billion over the next five years. □

— GREGORY WIRICK