

REPORT FROM THE HILL



Space Station

■ An area of controversy between Canada and the United States, concerning the role of the space station, appears to have been resolved in Canada's favour.

The space station – which will consist of a beam structure and pressurized modules for research labs and astronaut living quarters – is planned for construction in the mid-1990s. The cost to the US is estimated to be about US\$12 billion in 1984 dollars. Europe, Japan and Canada are contributing almost one-third as much again with Europe and Japan building research modules and Canada the Mobile Servicing Centre which, at a cost of C\$800 million, will be used for the station's assembly, maintenance and repair facility.

The controversy centered on whether the station should be used for military purposes. The US Department of Defense made a vigorous effort to include explicit language in the international agreements reserving its right to use the station for "national security purposes." Early in April, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger wrote Secretary of State George Shultz warning that the United States "must be prepared to go forward alone if the price of [international] co-operation is too high."

It would seem that Weinberger's view did not prevail. With the Defense Department ranged against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Department of State and all of the allies concerned, the National Security Council sided with NASA in favouring language describing the station's use as being "for peaceful purposes consistent with international law."

A leading American space expert, Ashton Carter of Harvard

University's Center for Science and International Affairs, speaking at a Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament seminar held in Ottawa, dismissed the space station's military usefulness and pointed out that the Pentagon had opposed the project from the outset specifically for that reason. Nevertheless, science writer Lydia Dotto warned in a *Globe and Mail* commentary on 1 May that the allies should not relax their guard. Although Canada plans to register the Servicing Centre under international law, which means that technically it will retain jurisdiction and control, it will be an integral part of the station, the management of which (and, therefore, the role both of the allies and of the Pentagon) remains undefined.

Soviet Overtures on Arms Control

■ Early in May, Alexander Bessmertnykh, a special envoy from the Soviet Union, visited Ottawa and met with Prime Minister Mulroney, Joe Clark and senior External Affairs officials. He brought an appeal from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev for Canada "to help guide the West" in reaching a deal to eliminate medium – and short-range nuclear missiles based in Europe. Practically the same day, Clark was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* describing the superpower proposals as "serious and significant" and expressing concern that Western European attitudes might be an obstacle to an arms control deal. "We can't allow a process which has involved this much movement by the superpowers to be frustrated at the beginning by some understandable but surmountable differences within the alliance", Mr. Clark said.

Southern African Situation

■ Early in April, Canadian Ambassador to the UN Stephen Lewis hinted that Canada might be asked to participate in a UN peace-keeping force in Mozambique

which has been beset by civil war abetted by the hostility of the neighbouring South African regime. This news elicited a skeptical editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen* of 13 April. It warned that the likelihood of all parties agreeing to invite the UN in was remote. Since a clear mandate from all disputants remained the key to a successful multilateral operation, the editorial declared, "Canada should make it known in advance that it will not be a party to a sure prescription for disaster."

Later in the month, the Secretary of State for External Affairs rejected a call by the NDP that the government sever diplomatic relations with South Africa following a military raid by Pretoria on Zambia. Clark denounced the raid, which took the lives of four civilians, calling their deaths "acts of murder" by South African troops. But he indicated that the government sought to keep political lines open to South Africa while continuing to apply economic pressure.

The government's preferred option is to work in concert with other like-minded nations to bring about peaceful change in the sub-continent. A *Canadian Press* report of 15 April quotes Mr. Clark saying that Canada will propose a new international peace mission to South Africa at the seven-nation Economic Summit in Venice in June. It would apparently be modelled on the *Eminent Persons Group* sent on a similar mission by the Commonwealth in 1986.

Parliamentary Committees

■ The Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs released a report on international financial institutions and the debt problem of developing countries on 13 May. In general terms, it questioned the continuing usefulness of dealing on a case-by-case basis with the debt problem. This strategy, pursued since 1982, needs to be supplemented by arrangements for an increased flow of funds to debtor countries through international agencies such as the World Bank

and creditor governments. It called on Canada to increase market access to indebted developing countries, to raise the proportion of Canada's official development assistance committed to the multilateral development banks from nineteen to twenty-five percent, and to play a leading role in consensus-building within the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in favour of *ad hoc* measures of debt relief and an enhanced role for World Bank lending.

Development assistance is the subject of another report tabled in Parliament on 28 May, this one from the House Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade (SCEAIT). Titled *For Whose Benefit?*, the report focuses on Canada's record in this area and how it can be improved.

The Committee made many detailed recommendations but one of its more overarching proposals was that the government adopt a Development Assistance Charter to guide Canada's development assistance programme. The Charter would contain three main principles: that Canadian aid should help the poorest countries in the world; that the programme should work to help developing countries solve problems in harmony with the natural environment; that development priorities should prevail over other considerations when setting objectives. The Committee placed particular stress on linking Canadian aid policy and human rights. The report recommends that CIDA elaborate a human rights policy framework that would create a system to classify countries which are potential recipients of Canadian assistance according to their human rights performance. Countries which ranked the lowest on the Committee's recommended scale would be automatically ineligible to receive direct bilateral assistance. □

– GREGORY WIRICK