

Multilateral Relations

Central America

In a letter on September 23 to John Bosley (PC, Don Valley West), Chairman of the Special Commons Committee on the Peace Process in Central America, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark responded to the Committee's report which was tabled in the House on July 5. Mr. Clark expressed the government's agreement with most of the recommendations. He observed that successive Canadian governments had been supportive of the Central America Five in their search for peace and that Canada remained "ready to participate in the Auxiliary Technical Group for the design of appropriate peacekeeping mechanisms." Canada was willing to consider offering technical assistance, if requested by the Five, according to Mr. Clark. The belief that the root causes of conflict in the region were economic and social had for some years been one of the main underlying precepts of Canadian policy had led Canada, since the early eighties, to increase substantially economic assistance to the region. Mr. Clark promised to open aid offices in Tegucigalpa, Managua and San Salvador and agreed on the need to strengthen diplomatic representation in the region (External Affairs News Release, September 26).

The Presidents of Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua did not celebrate the first anniversary of the signing of the Arias peace plan for there was not much to celebrate, according to the *Toronto Star* editorial on August 10. However, a year after its signing, the Arias plan remained the best hope of peace for Central America. And turning the hope into reality would take more work by the Central Americans and less obstruction from the United States. According to the *Globe and Mail* editorial on September 6, one positive effect of the accord, despite its failure, was to some extent to throw Central American policy back into indigenous hands. President Duarte of El Salvador called it "a second declaration of independence for Central America." If there was to be peace in the region, concluded the editorial, the nations of Central America must forge it themselves.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Committee on South Africa met in Toronto on August 2 and 3. Canada's External Affairs Minister and Chairman of the Committee Joe Clark made public the Canadian Action Plan to help implement the Strategy to Counter South African Propaganda and Censorship.

Canada had committed \$1 million to implement the plan and Mr. Clark announced that other countries also promised to develop national action plans.

Under the Action Plan the Canadian Embassy in Pretoria was to engage in more effective public affairs activities. Canada was to establish a scholarship program to provide young South Africans with the opportunity to receive an education that would prepare them for careers in journalism. In this regard, Canada proposed the creation of and undertook to provide a portion of the funding for a Commonwealth Journalism Award to be presented to an outstanding South African journalist (External Affairs News Release, August 3).

At the meeting in Toronto the External Affairs Minister also announced funding for a feasibility study which would explore the creation of a Commonwealth-wide network of non-governmental organizations dealing with education and training of black South Africans. There was an urgent need to increase the number of black South Africans in positions of authority in the private and public sectors when South Africa moved towards a non-racial democratic society (External Affairs News Release, August 2).

Exchange Rate

The Canadian dollar was worth US\$.813 at the beginning of August and US\$.811 at the end of September.

OAU

An international conference was convened in Oslo, Norway, in late August by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa. Canada contributed \$4.2 million to the widespread refugee problem in southern Africa, with assistance directed to victims in Mozambique, Malawi and Angola (CIDA News Release, August 23).

United Nations

Africa Mid-Term Review

External Relations and International Development Minister Monique Landry addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 12 at the mid-term re-