

REPORT FROM THE HILL



The 34th Session of Parliament resumed on 25 September, after its summer recess. There was no major discussion of foreign or defence policy in the House of Commons in the fall, but the main themes of official international security policy were laid out by Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark when he addressed the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September.

Clark at the United Nations

In that speech, Clark welcomed the changes in East-West relations, stressing "the turning towards democracy and the expansion of the market place" in Eastern bloc countries. Noting the remarkable progress in many regional conflicts, he described himself as encouraged by the situation in South Africa and welcomed Egyptian President Mubarak's ten-point plan for peace in the Middle East. He also indicated that the International Conference on Cambodia (see below) had served a positive purpose for identifying "international control mechanisms and reconstruction processes which can be brought into play once a settlement is reached."

Policy on Cambodia

After a month of meetings, the Paris Conference ended in failure on 31 August. With India, Canada had co-chaired a special committee charged with developing a framework for the establishment of an International Control Mechanism. Mr. Clark, who attended the opening, as well as the Ministerial Session from 28 to 30 August, indicated in response to a question in the House on 3 October as to why the government refused to recognize the Hun Sen government in Cambodia, that both

throughout the proceedings and afterwards, Canada has searched for a means "by which there could be a coalition government or an interim authority that could speak for all of the Cambodian people" and which would "minimize the role of the Khmer Rouge." He also indicated Canada's willingness to consider participating in a peacekeeping force once a settlement was reached.

Southern Africa

Mr. Clark chaired the fourth meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa, which met in Canberra, Australia, 7 to 9 August. The Committee had been created at the October 1987 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver to provide high level impetus and guidance of further Commonwealth objectives on Southern Africa. At the end of the meeting, Clark sent a letter to South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, which contained a defence of continuing sanctions, and which addressed aspects of the situation in neighbouring Namibia during its transition period to independence.

In early September, a five-member, all-party group of parliamentarians visited Namibia to observe the pre-election process, led by Walter McLean, MP, who is also Special Representative of the Government for Southern Africa and Commonwealth Affairs. At the end of their visit, the MPs issued a brief report indicating their general reassurance that the election itself would be "free and fair," but stressing the longer-term — both the process of transition between the election and actual independence, as well as the need for generous development aid to Namibia after independence in 1990.

From 17 to 24 October both the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malaysia. Following the general conference statement of 22 October in which

all the leaders agreed that, although there were signs of change, sanctions should not yet be relaxed, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, in a surprise move, issued a separate declaration in which she called for a more positive outlook towards Pretoria. On 23 October Prime Minister Mulroney told the press that he was angered by British procedures, which could, in his view, undermine future Commonwealth cooperation.

Parliamentary Committees

The Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence tabled its fifth report, *Canada's Land Forces*, on 31 October. The Committee had begun work on the report in 1987, but was delayed by the dissolution of the 33rd Parliament, as well as by the rapid changes in East-West relations and the cutbacks in defence spending announced by the government in the 27 April budget. The report rejected both withdrawal from Europe and continuation of the status quo for Canadian Forces in Europe. The latter would involve, according to the report, substantial expenditures on equipment that is unusable elsewhere.

Instead, without laying out a precise alternative, the Committee suggested a couple of options that would involve a substantial restructuring of forces in Europe. One was an air mobile brigade, which could be deployed if need be in locales other than Europe, and the other was for "defensive defence," as a response to the less offensive force structures envisaged for Europe by the Soviet Union.

The Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade (SCEAIT) began hearings on its major study of the year, Canada's relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The committee plans to visit the region in the spring of 1990 and issue its report later in the year.

In the meantime, the Committee held a hearing on 2 November on the \$42 million economic as-

sistance package for Poland and Hungary that the government had announced on 12 October. It also heard in early November from officials and outside experts concerning a positive agenda for Canada to adopt in the Organization of American States (OAS) following the government's decision to join. Also in November, the Committee struck a sub-committee on international debt under the chairmanship of Walter McLean.

The House of Commons Defence Committee visited bases on both the east and west coasts during October in its on-going study of maritime sovereignty.

Short Notes from the Hill

Margaret Mason was appointed Ambassador for Disarmament in August, succeeding Douglas Roche. Ms. Mason, a lawyer by training, was legal advisor to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (1980–1981), Policy Adviser to Joe Clark and Eric Nielsen when they were in the opposition (1981–1984) and Policy Adviser to Mr. Clark as Secretary of State for External Affairs since 1984 with responsibility for security issues, East-West relations, and export controls policy, among other items.

de Montigny Marchand, was named Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs on 18 October, succeeding James H. Taylor who will become Ambassador to Japan. Most recently Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Mr. Marchand has also served as Deputy Minister of Communications and as Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

On 27 October at a meeting of leaders in Costa Rica honouring the country's one hundred years of democracy, Prime Minister Mulroney announced that Canada would be joining the Organization of American States (OAS). Canada has restricted itself to observer status in the organization since 1972. □

— GREG WIRICK