

Policy

CABINET

New Conservative Government

In the federal election of September 4, Canadians placed a Progressive Conservative government in power, under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. A newly appointed 40-member Cabinet was sworn in September 17 by Governor-General Jeanne Sauvé at Government House in Ottawa. Those Cabinet members whose responsibilities might involve their offices in issues dealing with Canada and foreign affairs included the following: Joe Clark as External Affairs Minister, Flora MacDonald as Employment and Immigration Minister, John Fraser as Fisheries and Oceans Minister, Michael Wilson as Finance Minister, Robert Coates as Defence Minister, Jim Kelleher as International Trade Minister, Marcel Masse as Communications Minister and Monique Vézina as External Relations Minister.

DEFENCE

Defence Reports

With the release of the 1984-85 edition of the arms manual *Jane's Fighting Ships* came a sharp criticism of Canada's naval fleet in the foreword by editor Captain John Moore. Capt. Moore cited "years of procrastination" as the prime reason for the fact that the Canadian naval fleet had dwindled through obsolescence to the point where it was inadequate to accomplish the duties for which it existed. The editor pointed out that the great majority of Canada's total of twenty-three warships were beyond the twenty-year age limit, and all were older than ten years. While praising both Canadian ships' companies and shore support operations for keeping the fleet operational, Capt. Moore added that they had been "placed in a most invidious position by the failure of successive governments to understand or accept the basic principles of naval planning" (*Globe and Mail*, August 23). The responsibilities of the Navy as established by policy — "world naval operations, surveillance, control and defence of Canadian waters, defence of North

America in conjunction with the US Navy" and NATO contributions — were unrealistic in terms of Canada's ability to meet its commitments, according to Capt. Moore. Among suggestions put forward by the editor of *Jane's* was a call for an enlargement of Canada's naval fleet in addition to the stopgap measure of a planned modernization of existing vessels (in anticipation of six new frigates planned for the end of the decade). Criticisms similar to those made by Capt. Moore had earlier been made by several NATO members, who questioned Canada's ability to fulfill its primary NATO role of providing escorts and anti-submarine protection for Atlantic convoys. At the same time, it was pointed out that Canada lacked operational capability in ice — thus preventing the deterrence of submarine activity in northern Canadian territorial waters.

Responding in part to the criticisms outlined in *Jane's*, then Defence Minister Jean-Jacques Blais stated August 24 that Canada was considering acquisition of a nuclear submarine as a strengthening measure with regard to the Navy (*Globe and Mail*, August 25). "Serious analysis" of such a proposal was required in order to protect Canadian sovereignty, he added. Mr. Blais said that he had already proposed to Cabinet the purchase of frigates in addition to the six to be ready by 1992. With the construction of the first six, Canada would be in a position to "look to the on-going delivery of additional ships," he stated. The Minister added that various considerations would be involved in any government decision to implement the enlargement suggestions put forward by Capt. Moore — the choice between diesel and nuclear submarines, and the question of Canadian construction, both affecting price. Mr. Blais called Canada's the "best anti-submarine warfare navy in the world," taking into consideration the "total concept" — involving submarine hunting Aurora aircraft and Sea King helicopters. He reiterated that Canada was addressing the problem of naval obsolescence at present.

Further criticism of Canada's defence forces came in September when the Business Council on National Issues, a group of executive officers of major Canadian corporations, issued a report following two-and-a-half years of study of Canada's conventional military forces and