CANADA SEEKS TO IMPROVE U.N. CRISIS RESPONSE

Canada has begun an in-depth study of the United Nation's options for strengthening its ability to respond rapidly and coherently to emerging crises, including establishment of a standing UN military force.

Recent peacekeeping experience has highlighted the need for improvement, for example, in Rwanda, where the UN intervened only after the massacre of thousands of people, and troops were not deployed until months after they were officially committed.

According to a backgrounder released by the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defence, which will jointly oversee the study, its focus will be on operations and tactics, "given the virtually complete ad hoc nature of mounting today's peace operations" and the "virtual vacuum at the operational level in the UN system." The study will also examine political and strategic dimensions of crisis response and such non-military aspects of peace operations as preventive diplomacy.

A major option the study will examine is the creation of a standing UN military force that could be rapidly deployed. In addition to the feasibility and utility of such a force, the study will consider its command and control structure, the role of the Security Council, any necessary changes to the Secretariat and the effect of a UN force on the response to crises by regional organizations.

The first of three conferences of peacekeeping experts to be held as part of the study will take place in February at the new Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia. An international consultative group of diplomats, government officials, soldiers and academics will review the work in progress.

The study was first announced by Foreign Minister André Ouellet in a speech at the UN General Assembly last fall (see *Canada Quarterly*, October 1994). Canada will submit a set of practical recommendations based on the study at the 50th anniversary session of the General Assembly next September.

Developments in Rwanda and Haiti

In response to a UN request, Canada will send 120 military personnel to Rwanda in January to provide logistical support to the UN mission there. They will replace 360 Canadian communications specialists who are leaving after a six-month tour with the mission.

As part of Canada's contributions to the restoration of democracy in Haiti, about 100 expatriate Haitians living in Canada and the U.S. are completing a special training session at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police academy in Regina, Saskatchewan, to prepare them to join a new civilian police force in their native country. They are expected to start work in Haiti early this year.
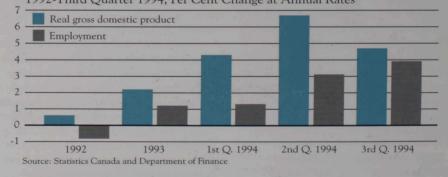

ECONOMIC UPDATE

According to Statistics Canada, real GDP grew by 4.7 per cent in the third quarter of 1994 over the previous year, and an average of 5 per cent since January, Canada's best economic performance in more than six years.

Inflation remains low. The consumer price index rose by 0.2 per cent at annual rates and unit labour costs declined by 2.1 per cent in the third quarter.

Consumer confidence was at its highest level in five years in the third quarter, strengthened by a sustained growth in employment. The unemployment rate fell to 10.2 per cent in the third quarter, and dropped to 9.6 per cent in November, remaining steady in December. The economy created 431,000 full-time jobs in 1994.

Trade with the United States continued to expand in the third quarter. Canadian merchandise exports to the U.S. rose by 21 per cent over the same period last year, to $133.6 billion, and imports of U.S. goods increased by 19 per cent to $100 billion.

Canada's Growth in Real GDP and Employment
1992-Third Quarter 1994, Per Cent Change at Annual Rates

Bar chart legend: Real gross domestic product (blue), Employment (grey). Categories: 1992, 1993, 1st Q. 1994, 2nd Q. 1994, 3rd Q. 1994. Y-axis from -1 to 7.

Source: Statistics Canada and Department of Finance

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