

External Affairs Minister Reviews Canada's Foreign Policy Objectives at the United Nations

In his first official speech as Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark declared that peace and disarmament will be the "dominant priority" of Canadian foreign policy under the new Conservative government.

Speaking at the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 25, Mr. Clark said that Canada "is determined to continue to play a leading role in the search for peace and disarmament".

Peace and freedom

"We defend, and actively assert, the values of democracy and individual freedom. We believe it is essential to pursue the goals of peace and freedom simultaneously.

"We shall seek, through concrete and realistic steps, progress toward a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We shall encourage superpower and multilateral discussion on all outer space weapons, and shall commission further studies on how a space weapons ban might be verified.

"We shall work for the success of next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, in order to prevent the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. We shall bring to bear our technical expertise in verification measures to ensure mutual confidence and security in areas where arms control agreements can be achieved.

"We shall encourage agreement on a mutual and balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe, and hence reduce the danger of escalation to nuclear war. We shall continue to press for a verifiable convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

"Canada will continue its financial support of the World Disarmament Campaign. We shall, in addition, expect that the newly-created Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security will contribute its share of studies and advice on specific arms control proposals and measures to reduce international tension."

Committed to the United Nations

Stressing Canada's strong commitment to the United Nations, Mr. Clark reiterated Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's pledge that the new government would "play a more active role in the United Nations and its agencies. Our government is committed strongly to the United Nations.... A dynamic United Nations system is essential for countries like



Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark.

Canada-equally for the superpowers."

Mr. Clark said he came to the United Nations expecting questions from the Third World and other diplomats about possible changes in Canada's traditional commitments to development aid, moderate approach to East/West relations and sympathy for debtor countries. His speech offered assurance that the Conservative government's policies would remain "squarely in the tradition" of its predecessors.

"Our new Government intends to maintain Canada's commitment to reaching 0.7 per cent of the GNP by 1990 in Official Development Assistance. Despite economic problems at home, we shall not turn our backs on the world's disadvantaged peoples. A greater share of our aid budget will be spent by non-governmental organizations, which have proven their effectiveness in community development programs", Mr. Clark stated.

On global economic questions, Mr. Clark noted that the record of the international community was one of achievement, although far from perfect. "We must ensure that the specialized institutions that we have created will

prove capable of coping with current and future challenges. There is growing support for a pragmatic, issue-oriented approach". Organizations such as the IMF/World Bank, GATT, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and others which have specific mandates within the multilateral system, were being encouraged to work with a renewed sense of commitment and co-operation.

Mr. Clark also touched upon other areas of Canadian concern — Cyprus, where Canada has peacekeeping troops stationed; the occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces; the Middle East; Central America and Namibian independence from South Africa.

Importance of ASEAN

In the course of his United Nations statement, Mr. Clark reiterated that Canada "supports ASEAN countries in their efforts to bring peace to the unfortunate country of Kampuchea, which continues to be occupied unlawfully".

The rapidly evolving role that member states of ASEAN are playing was further illustrated during the discussions between Mr. Clark and United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz. At the most recent of the quarterly sessions between Canada and the United States held in Toronto, October 15-17, the ministers agreed that economic ties with the countries of the Pacific Basin, particularly the members of ASEAN, represents an increasingly important dimension in the foreign policies of both their nations.

New Secretary of State for External Affairs

Born in High River, Alberta on June 5, 1939, Mr. Clark is a former Prime Minister and Party Leader. He is also a former journalist and political scientist.

First returned to the House of Commons in the General Election of 1972, Mr. Clark was elected Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party on February 22, 1976. He was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 4, 1979 following the May 22 General Election. His government was defeated at the polls on February 18, 1980. Mr. Clark was succeeded as Party Leader by Brian Mulroney on June 11, 1983.

In 1983, he undertook responsibility on behalf of the PC Party to study the issues of arms control and disarmament. His other Caucus responsibilities have included chairperson of the Caucus committee on Youth and chairperson of the Caucus committee on Environment.