

Ottawa-based Arab ambassadors, led by their Dean, Ziad Shawwaf of Saudi Arabia, met with senior External Affairs officials to seek clarification of the Prime Minister's statement and its discrepancy with the Brault letter. The *Globe & Mail* reported on December 24 that they were told at the meeting on December 24 at the Department of External Affairs by Joseph Stanford, Associate Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, that "The most recent statements of Government policy are those of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs."

The discussion shifted to the Commons where Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville), NDP critic on Human Rights (External), noted that "when thousands of people are imprisoned in camps; when even children protesting their oppression as they must, fall before lethal ammunition, and when the nations of the world condemn these excesses of the occupying army of Israel, our Prime Minister commends the restraint of the oppressive conqueror (*Hansard*, January 19).

As the electronic and print media continued to bring images of disturbances in occupied territories into Canadian homes, calls for the convening of an international peace conference to resolve the Palestinian issue increased. NDP external affairs critic Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill) cautioned that neither terrorism nor military force was the answer to problems which required structural and political solutions. He called the use of live ammunition on crowds, and the increasingly routine resort to violence as "disturbing and unacceptable" (*Hansard*, December 17).

New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent expressed concern about the alleged refusal by the Government of Israel to allow the delivery of food to Palestinian refugees and called on Canada to publicly endorse proposals for an international peace conference. Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark concurred that "food should not be used as a weapon," and that Canada was encouraging all parties to accept the approach to peace through a conference (*Hansard*, January 20). Canada strongly endorsed the United Nations appeal to Israel to exercise restraint in putting down riots in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Canada's Ambassador to the UN, Stephen Lewis, in a statement issued on December 25, echoed the criticism: "Long years of occupation have led to more acute frustrations on both sides, resulting in the increased violence the world has recently witnessed" (*Montreal Gazette*, December 28).

Following his remarks of late December about Israeli restraint, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was quoted as saying in Napanee, Ontario, that recent events had altered his earlier view that Israel had shown "restraint" in dealing with the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza. Mr. Mulroney was reported by the *Toronto Star* on January 23 as saying that he supported External Affairs Minister Joe Clark's view that Israel had violated human rights by using food as a weapon in trying to put down Arab rioting in the occupied territories.

About 1,000 people protested in Toronto on January 23 against Israeli actions and demanded more Canadian efforts to help Palestinians (CTV News). Another angry gathering, which included many children, marched through

downtown Toronto calling for an end to the continuing killing of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The 250 marchers hoped to persuade the Canadian government to take a more active role in pressuring Israel to stop the carnage, a spokesman for the group, Naji Farah, said (*Toronto Star*, January 18).

Emerging from a Liberal caucus meeting on January 20 and in a meeting with reporters quoted in the *Ottawa Citizen* on January 21, John Tumer called on Israel to recognize the human rights of Palestinians while maintaining law and order in the occupied territories. In the same news story he was also reported to have reiterated the Liberals' support for Israel's right to exist behind secure and recognized borders, and for the legitimate right of Palestinians to establish a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He urged the government to pursue such a policy on the Middle East.

Japan

Prime Minister's Visit

Attention centered on Canada-Japan trade, investment and culture during Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita's visit to Canada in mid-January. The Japanese Prime Minister was on his way back to Japan after meeting with President Reagan in Washington. Japan is Canada's second-largest trading partner. So far, Japanese companies have made about \$2 billion in direct investments in Canada, while Canadian companies have about \$160 million invested in Japan. After running annual surpluses with Japan from 1973 to 1981, Canada's trade balance slipped into an \$80 million deficit in 1982 that grew to \$1.7 billion by 1986. In 1987, however, the deficit began to decrease. After ten months of 1987, it stood at \$532 million compared with \$1.3 billion for the corresponding period a year earlier. The turnabout was accounted for by higher exports of lumber, pulp and fish. There had been no change in the composition of trade between the two nations, and coal remained Canada's largest export (*Globe & Mail*, January 13).

During the official visit to Canada, the Japanese Prime Minister offered a tempered response to the Canada-US free trade agreement in a statement released jointly with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. A report in the *Globe & Mail* on January 16 stated that Japan was concerned a free trade deal would produce a "fortress North America" which would be detrimental to Japanese trading interests.

Cultural Exchange

While at a banquet hosted by Prime Minister Mulroney, Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita announced a donation of 100 million Japanese yen (approximately Cdn\$1 million) to the Canada Council to establish a Japan-Canada Culture and Arts Exchange Program. It would provide grants for exchanges between young Japanese and Canadian artists, and grants for Japanese artists touring Canada. The Council would also establish an award for outstanding Canadian publications dealing with Japan, and for English and French translations of Japanese literature (*The Gazette*, January 16).