

DEFENCE NOTES



Canadian Forces Sent to Persian Gulf

At a press conference on 10 August, Prime Minister Mulroney announced the decision by the government to dispatch three ships to the Persian Gulf region "to assist in the deterrence of further aggression" by Iraq. The ships are: the HMCS *Athabaskan*, a Tribal-class destroyer commissioned in 1972 and equipped with torpedoes, guns, two helicopters, passive air defence systems and Sea Sparrow air defence missiles; HMCS *Terra Nova*, an Improved Restigouche-class frigate commissioned in 1959 and equipped with guns, torpedoes, and passive air defence systems, but no air defence weapons; and HMCS *Protecteur*, an unarmed supply and maintenance ship. The combined compliment on the ships is approximately 800.

The ships will be "on location in the region by mid-September," said the Prime Minister. He also noted that the ships precise operating location and manner of employment will be decided in light of circumstances at that time.

At a press conference immediately following the Prime Minister's, the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff, Vice-Admiral Charles Thomas stated that in the days before actual sailing from Canada, *Athabaskan* and *Terra Nova* would be modified by adding "close-in weapons systems," new electronic warfare equipment, and upgraded chaff and decoy systems for improved defence against air attack.

The London Summit

At the beginning of July NATO leaders met in London to consider their response to the political changes in Europe. In advance of the meeting, President Bush sent a

letter to NATO heads of state proposing a variety of changes in alliance force structure and doctrine. In particular, recalling his earlier decisions to cancel plans for a follow-on missile to the short-range Lance, and for new nuclear artillery shells, Bush suggested modifying the doctrine of flexible response to reflect a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. He also proposed to eliminate the nuclear artillery shells currently deployed in Europe.

Initial reaction to the Bush letter was mixed at home, but warm in Europe. The Bush letter appeared to reflect the thinking of allied leaders, with the partial exception of the French, and respond to the needs of the Soviet Union. In Washington, doubts were expressed, however, about the meaning of the proposed change in nuclear doctrine. In sum, the Bush proposal appeared to favour preserving the option of first use of nuclear weapons, while reducing reliance on such weapons.

The NATO Declaration

On 6 July, at the end of the London meeting, a lengthy declaration was issued. Among other things, it proposed a non-aggression statement by NATO and the Warsaw Pact affirming the intention "to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state..." The declaration underlined the need "to prevent any nation from maintaining disproportionate power on the continent."

The declaration also dealt with NATO forces in Europe. It noted that, with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe, NATO's integrated force structure would change to include the following: smaller active forces, which will be multinational, mobile and versatile, permitting maximum flexibility for political leaders in crisis situations; a re-

duction in the readiness of active units, fewer exercises and less training; reliance on mobilisation to build up large forces should they be needed.

Echoing the language of the Bush letter, the communique spoke of nuclear weapons as "truly weapons of last resort," but asserted the need to maintain "for the foreseeable future" a mix of nuclear and conventional forces. However, the declaration proposed to negotiate the elimination of nuclear artillery shells in Europe, and to move away from the military strategy of forward defence.

Soviet reaction to the London meeting was positive. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze expressed general satisfaction with the declaration, describing the changes in doctrine as "potentially important decisions."

Gorbachev Meets Kohl

Meeting at Mineralnye Vody in the Soviet Union on 16 July, Gorbachev and Kohl reached agreement on the place of a united Germany in NATO. Under an agreement to be worked out between a unified Germany and the Soviet Union, the 350,000 troops in East Germany will withdraw over a period of three or four years. The Soviet Union agreed that a united Germany can be a member of NATO. Chancellor Kohl agreed to accept a ceiling of 370,000 troops in the armed forces of a unified Germany. He also stated that when Soviet forces leave what is now East Germany, German troops under NATO control would be stationed there, but no foreign troops would be permitted. The two leaders also agreed that a united Germany would renounce the manufacture and possession of chemical weapons, and sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

Britain's Peace Dividend

In May, a defence paper intended for the private use of Prime Minister Thatcher and se-

nior Cabinet members, was leaked to the *Economist*. The study proposed to reduce the British Army from fifty-five battalions to thirty-two, and Royal Navy frigates from fifty-eight to thirty-two, promising savings of almost \$40 billion over ten years. In mid-June less sweeping but highly controversial cuts were announced by Defence Minister Tom King. He told a Commons committee that the Warsaw Pact has "to all intents and purposes ceased to exist." Announcing a cut of approximately \$1.2 billion in the defence budget (about three percent before inflation), King cancelled an order for thirty-three Tornado aircraft and confirmed that Britain is planning major reductions in its army and air force units assigned to NATO. The planned reductions in forces stationed in Germany appear to be greater than those under negotiation at the Conventional Forces talks in Vienna.

Grounded Looking Glass

Since 3 February 1961 the US Air Force has maintained a fleet of airplanes which would guarantee command and control of US nuclear forces even after the destruction of ground facilities. Referred to as "Looking Glass," one of the planes has been in the air at all times, commanded by an Air Force General. On Tuesday 24 July, the twenty-four-hour airborne alert was ended when General John Chain, Commander of Strategic Air Command, landed at Offut AFB. The move to "ground alert status" reflects both budgetary pressures and greater confidence that a Soviet nuclear alert could be detected in time to take precautionary measures. The Soviets have also cooperated. A US Senate Armed Services Report released in late July noted that the Soviets have ceased submarine patrols off the US coast, and flights by Bear bombers to Canada's northern border. □

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