

# Clark's misfortunes raise questions

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concerned about the attitude of some of Mr. Mulrooney's senior advisers. The Prime Minister's trip to England and the Bonn economic summit meetings demonstrated how the Mulrooney bulldozer takes over on the road, commanding embassies, foreign service officers, communications, even the ambassador's bedroom, and leaving a trail of bruised feelings in its wake.

Those people all supposedly work for Mr. Clark, who was allowed to take only one staff person with him and who was reduced to the role of observer. But the suspicions about unfriendly intent in the Prime Minister's Office go back much farther. Concern about Mr. Mulrooney's reaction prompted the over-reaction at External Affairs when some relatively innocuous memos surfaced last fall.

There was a conscious decision taken before Christmas to keep Mr. Clark on the road. Any ambassador worth his or her salt could be counted on to lay on a good reception for the visiting minister and Mr. Clark was off to Mexico, Europe and Japan in such a hectic schedule that he was in Ottawa only long enough to pick up clean shirts.

But, while Mr. Clark was living on airplanes, Mr. Mulrooney moved quickly to assert his primacy over the country's principal foreign rela-

tionship, the multi-faceted interlock with the United States.

His early visit to Washington and the priority given the so-called Shamrock Summit are only the window-dressing, but it was PMO men who were flitting back and forth to Washington making the arrangements and doing the briefings, although arranging such things is one of the reasons Canada maintains a large embassy in Washington.

## Fuming minister had to apologize over Star Wars

It was not an accident that the Investment Canada bill which wipes out the Foreign Investment Review Agency, long an irritant to the U.S. Government, was the first and about the only substantial legislation the Mulrooney Government brought forward, other than the budget bills.

Star Wars, the popular term given the U.S. efforts to develop an anti-ballistic missile defensive system which could jeopardize arms reduc-

tion negotiations with the Soviet Union, is another example of an area where Mr. Clark has been kept scrambling to get in line with the Mulrooney determination to please the United States.

At a press conference in December, Mr. Mulrooney stated in unambiguous terms his policy of "my President, right or wrong." The United States is the ally and the Soviet Union is the enemy (a sentiment repeated in the foreign policy green paper) and that approach carried the day on the Star Wars question.

While Mr. Clark and his department were more inclined to caution, the decision was taken for Canada to endorse as prudent the research into the Strategic Defence Initiative (as Star Wars is formally known), with the caveat that it should not threaten the 1972 anti-ballistic missiles treaty.

Mr. Clark's discomfiture on the issue was enhanced when his old loyalist, Defence Minister Erik Nielsen, let him down by failing to inform him that Canada had been invited to participate in the SDI research at a meeting of defence ministers in Luxembourg.

A fuming Mr. Clark had to apologize to the House of Commons. Again when it came to formulating Canada's response to the invitation, it was not External Affairs with all of its contacts and expertise that took the lead. Instead, Mr. Mulrooney appointed Arthur Kroeger, an official in the Privy Council Office, to investigate the invitation. Mr. Clark's special ambassador on disarmament, Douglas Roche, was nowhere to be seen.

The most obvious repudiation from Mr. Mulrooney was delivered in front of the television cameras in Bonn with Mr. Clark forced to look on. The External Affairs Minister had followed his instincts and expressed Canadian displeasure at the U.S. trade embargo of Nicaragua, and about especially the fact Washington had not informed Canada in advance.

But, asked the same question, Mr. Mulrooney said he was "not at all displeased" and even ridiculed the suggestion that the United States might want to consult Canada "when they know our answer in advance."

By the time the green paper surfaced publicly, Mr. Clark appeared to have lost all of the battles in Cabinet. Star Wars was on a different trajectory, free trade with the United States was being probed by Trade Minister James Kelleher for a different time.

In the final version of the green paper, the controversial Star Wars question was reduced to two mentions, human rights got only 17 lines and even the economic discussion, which was to be the principal original thrust of the exercise, was presented in the language of a high school textbook.

Once the green paper was tabled, Mr. Clark seemed to have no allies on the Government side to help him withstand the Opposition scorn.

Could it be more evidence that the Prime Minister shared the scorn? Senior officials who have been privy to the process say they have detected no malevolence directed at Mr. Clark from the PMO and sources indicated that around the red-leathered Cabinet table, Mr. Mulrooney often defers to Mr. Clark or seeks his advice.

It is more a question of the Prime Minister being preoccupied with his own agenda, regardless of whose turf is the scene of his poaching. That could explain delaying the substance of a public review of foreign policy until after the Shamrock Summit, the stepped-up commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S. trade thrust are already under way.

But Mr. Clark and his department also bear responsibility for the fiasco. The green paper was delayed by much internal debate and attempts to balance the new economic overlay against more traditional departmental concerns. In the end the department eschewed the bold in favor of the safe. Knowledgeable observers in the foreign policy field say Mr. Clark could have demanded more imagination from his advisers but didn't.

Ironically, it was only the refusal of the opposition parties to become the backdrop for what they considered to be an after-the-fact colloquium that may have salvaged something for Mr. Clark. In an attempt to meet some of the more obvious criticism, the Cabinet has agreed to delay for three or four months its decision on Star Wars research in order to give the special parliamentary committee reviewing it at least the appearance of having something to chew on.