

HAROLD KLEPAK

BASED ON THE SPENDING PLANS, WHAT can one deduce about the government's priorities for the country's foreign policy during the 1990s? With little doubt, the priority is the budget. And in this, I share Mr. Ross' opinion somewhat. The impact will be limited; the change in priorities observed here is not extraordinary. I think that the fundamentals of Canada's foreign policy have not changed.

In broad outline, the government wants the opportunity to "multilateralize" our relations with the United States. As far as Europe is concerned, the advantages of these links have been quite obvious since the 1970s. But we must be very frank about all this: it is much easier this year to talk about budget cuts because we can do it without attracting too much attention on the international scene.

In 1987, Australia published a White Paper on Defence that promised a much stronger policy and additional moneys. Nevertheless, two years later, for budgetary reasons, there has been a retrenchment. In New Zealand, the same thing happened, but drew much more attention because New Zealand came close to withdrawing from its alliance with the United States. In the eyes of Washington there are countries that undermine the global situation much more than Canada. It is, therefore, much easier for us to make cuts while remaining a US ally in good standing. In fact, Canada is not that far behind other countries of same or comparable size, either within NATO or in other alliances of which the US is a member.

The UN and peacekeeping: here we have an issue of increasing importance. Peacekeeping operations are sprouting up ... literally everywhere ... many more are under consideration ... Canada is asked to take part in almost each and every one of them, and every time we have been asked, we have accepted. Of course, we have established criteria for participation, but if we are asked to participate and if the operation is conducted in a proper manner, we do it. So cuts in the defence budget, such as the ones we know about now, could have an impact on operations of this kind.

In my opinion, peacekeeping issues and the link between defence and international aid – our commitment towards the outside world, towards the Third World – are the ones that worry me the most. I think that Canada enjoys a very special status; our country is very active within the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the UN, peacekeeping operations, NATO, NORAD, and so on. It is very much part of the international system; it is a committed country. Therefore, I think that peacekeeping operations guarantee the maintenance of our armed forces' ability to act, not only to provide logistic support, but also in the task of providing infantry. We must keep a close watch on this.

Of course, Northern and sovereignty issues are, for many, linked to the nuclear-powered submarines. In my opinion, this is one of the main issues now before us: how do we go about meeting our commitments and maintaining our sovereignty in the North?

FEN HAMPSON

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE been truly remarkable. The scaling down of the defence procurement programmes and objectives of the government's White Paper on defence released barely two years ago, in my opinion, represents a significant turn in government policy. The subs have gone, other major programmes cancelled or deferred. To be sure not everything has been gutted, but the government's commitment to the basic parameters of the White Paper are just that: a set of paper commitments without an explanation as to the means available to achieve them.

This is really quite extraordinary. The purpose of the White Paper was to look ahead to Canadian defence requirements into the next century and provide steady and predictable funding programmes. Barely two years later Canadians are being told that the money is not there by the same government that wrote that document.

... I would suggest that right now we do not have a coherent method of planning for establishing our national defence requirements. Defence planning takes place in a vacuum without any consideration of budgetary limits or fiscal realities. The White Paper was a wish list and right now we are in danger of having our defence posture dictated to us by the Department of Finance if that wish list is chopped to accommodate new fiscal realities.

There is obviously a need for the government to undertake a fundamental re-evaluation of Canada's defence requirements and commitments, not only in the light of new fiscal realities and the resources available for defence, but also changing strategic and geostrategic trends. Moreover, I would argue this evaluation should become part of a regular, on-going, routinized process. It is simply ludicrous to undertake a major re-evaluation of our defence posture every fifteen years as has been done in previous White Papers, as if the world and our defence needs only changed every fifteen years....

Second, fiscal and budgetary considerations must be brought into defence planning much earlier in the game than they are now. Defence spending is too important to be left to the Department of National Defence and by the same token it is too important to be left to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board ...

Third, accounting and budgeting methods for costing all major programmes should be made public. I think that there is far too much secrecy that plagues the weapons acquisition and budgeting process today. I think that the Department of National Defence hurt its own case for nuclear-powered submarines by not making its accounting methods and assumptions public.

Fourth, we need a much better basis for strategic assessment in how the changing strategic landscape will affect Canadian defence commitments and priorities in the years ahead. The critics justifiably attacked the 1960s Cold War rhetoric of the White Paper. Much of that criticism could have been anticipated before the White Paper was written. Such

an assessment would involve the solicitation of views from the broader community of intelligence analysts not limited to the Department of National Defence ...

Fifth, there is an obvious and growing need to integrate strategic threat assessments with the functional requirements of Canadian security policy understood in the broadest sense. What sorts of roles in missions is Canada best suited for in preserving and maintaining international security? Are there certain kinds of missions which are more compatible with our foreign policy goals and objectives? ...

There are some that argue that the major challenges to our future security will increasingly come from drug smugglers, the illegal flow of immigrants across our borders and shores, oil spills and pollution, and the plundering of natural resources within our coastal waters. Does the military have a role to play in these sorts of non-traditional security operations, or do we need to create special forces to deal with these new and emerging challenges to our security? ...

... There are some important lessons that came out of the events of this past week. Lessons which have to do with the way we plan for our national security and defence. It will be extremely unfortunate if these lessons are ignored and the bureaucratic response is business as usual.

*"What I see in broad brush is the continued marginalization of Canadian defence policy and therefore foreign policy."*

*"It is simply ludicrous to undertake a major re-evaluation of defence posture every fifteen years ... as if the world and our defence needs only changed every fifteen years."*