

REPORT FROM THE HILL



Editor's Note: The 33rd Parliament came to an end on 1 October when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney called an election for 21 November. The new Parliament is expected to be called into session early in December. Because of the timing of the election and Peace & Security's production schedule, election results are not reflected in this issue of the magazine.

Southern Africa Policy

■ A Commonwealth committee on Southern Africa consisting of eight foreign ministers under the chairmanship of Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark met in Toronto on 2 and 3 August. The committee had been created at last October's Commonwealth summit in Vancouver to develop plans to combat *apartheid*. Its end-of-meeting report contained suggestions to Commonwealth and other governments about how to widen and tighten economic and other sanctions. Yet the opposition in Parliament appeared to judge the results of the meeting disappointing.

On 10 August Liberal MP Bob Kaplan demanded to know if the government planned to invoke total sanctions against the South African regime, citing remarks the Prime Minister had made before the UN General Assembly in October 1985 that Canada would sever relations absolutely if no progress were made in dismantling *apartheid*. Similar questions persisted from both Liberal and NDP members in the weeks leading up to the Prime Minister's address to the UN General Assembly on 29 September. In that speech, Mr. Mulroney referred to "specific new measures [announced earlier in the week] to tighten the ban on government contracts with South African com-

panies and a further ban on high technology." This did not prevent Liberal leader John Turner from criticizing the Prime Minister in the House the following day for his failure to use the occasion to break off both diplomatic and economic relations with South Africa.

UN Peacekeeping

■ On 9 August Defence Minister Perrin Beatty announced that Canada had agreed to provide troops as part of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) set up to monitor the ceasefire in the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. An initial force of about 850 is being provided by twenty-four countries. Only fifteen Canadians will serve in the eventual force of 350 unarmed military observers who will patrol the ceasefire zone along the 1,200 kilometre border between the countries. In the first six months, however, Canada is providing 495 additional troops to set up a communications infrastructure for UNIIMOG. On 24 August Mr. Beatty moved a resolution of support in the Commons for Canadian participation in UNIIMOG which prompted an extended debate on peacekeeping before all-party consent was obtained.

Central America Policy

■ On 23 September External Affairs Minister Joe Clark released a copy of a letter he had sent to John Bosley, chairman of the Special House Committee on the Peace Process in Central America, in response to the recommendations that committee had made to the government on 5 July. The chief news was the government's agreement to provide \$100 million in addition to currently planned expenditures to assist Central American reconstruction and economic development efforts over a six-year period, 1988 through 1994. This represents substantially more than a doubling of bilateral assistance to the region over the previous five-year period.

In principle, the Minister ac-

cepted the importance of strengthening Canadian diplomatic representation in the region, while rejecting the idea of opening mini-posts in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. Mr. Clark indicated that he hoped to be able to upgrade the position of chargé d'affaires in Guatemala to the level of ambassador. The government also accepted the committee's recommendations concerning technical assistance in human rights and democratic development, and with regard to verification and control measures to buttress the peace accord signed by the five Central American powers in August 1987. However, Canadian assistance would depend on a request by the five countries which, in the latter case, has been stymied by a protracted dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua that has reduced cooperation in the region to a minimum.

The government had already moved on another recommendation of the committee in favour of the creation of an International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development. Bill C-147, an Act to establish such a centre was introduced in the House on 15 August and Royal Assent was given on 30 September. The centre, which will be established in Montreal, is similar to the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security insofar as it is a crown corporation which has assured funding for the first five years of its existence. Its mandate will be to provide technical assistance, training, and resources for the development of electoral, legislative, judicial and legal systems both in Canada and abroad.

Short Notes from the Hill

■ The second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled "The Canadian Submarine Acquisition Project," was tabled in the House on 18 August. It provides an overview of testimony heard by the committee, largely from defence officials, but

also from outside analysts and critics, on the initial stage of the submarine acquisition programme. No recommendations were made.

■ On 14 August, Yves Fortier was named by External Affairs Minister Joe Clark to replace Stephen Lewis as Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations. Mr. Fortier was a partner in one of Canada's largest law firms and a director of the Royal Bank of Canada. A former president of the Canadian Bar Association and a member of the permanent Court of Arbitration, he has also represented Canada at the Hague in bilateral disputes with the United States and France over territorial and fishing rights. On 26 October it became clear that he would be representing Canada on the UN Security Council when Canada won the election for a two-year term to one of the non-permanent seats reserved for Western countries on the fifteen-member council.

■ On 29 September it was noted in the House that the Ministers responsible for Science and Technology, Robert de Cotret and Frank Oberle would that day sign an intergovernmental agreement with the United States, nine European countries and Japan governing international participation in the US space station project over the next thirty years. A major point of contention during three years of difficult negotiations was national security use of the station. The compromise reached mandates peaceful use, but does not attempt to define or interpret that phrase. Canada will receive three percent of the use of all station elements in return for providing the servicing equipment for station repair and maintenance.

■ In September, the United Nations General Assembly elected Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, Douglas Roche, as chairperson of the First Committee for the 43rd session. □

— GREGORY WIRICK