

REPORT FROM THE HILL



The Gulf Crisis

■ On 8 August, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark announced that the government had put regulations in place to give effect to UN sanctions against Iraq: all Iraqi and Kuwaiti imports to Canada and all Canadian exports there were prohibited; all unused export credits ceased and nothing further would be issued; and any assets or securities of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti governments or their agencies were frozen, while no funds could be transferred there.

On 10 August, shortly after a visit with US President Bush on 6 August, Prime Minister Mulroney announced that Canada would send two destroyers and a supply ship, with 934 personnel aboard, to join the multinational force that was being assembled in the Persian Gulf. Both Liberal House Leader Herb Gray and NDP external affairs critic Bill Blaikie pointed out that it was the first time since World War II that Canada had sent troops abroad other than under the flag of the United Nations. Both also called for Parliament to be recalled immediately from its summer break to debate the decision.

The Prime Minister chose to avoid this course, which is required under the National Defence Act, by delaying putting the ships on active service ("war ready") until they reached their destination. (For more on the National Defence Act, see *Defence Notes Backgrounder* on page 16).

On 14 September the Prime Minister also announced that the government would deploy a squadron of CF-18 fighter aircraft to the Gulf to provide air cover for Canadian ships and sailors, as well as

another 450 personnel. At the same time, an additional sum of up to \$75 million was allocated for humanitarian and economic assistance for people and countries seriously affected by the crisis. An initial \$2.5 million had already been provided.

The Oka Dispute

■ Meanwhile, on 14 August, in response to a request from the Quebec government, 2,500 Canadian troops were deployed to two Quebec sites at Oka and Chateauguay which were the scene of blockades by Mohawk natives in a dispute over land claims in the area. After prolonged negotiations, Mohawks began working with the army on 29 August to dismantle barricades near Chateauguay, which had blocked the Mercier Bridge that links South Shore communities to Montreal. The bridge reopened to traffic 6 September (after being closed since 11 July), but a small enclave of Mohawks continued to hold out at Oka until 26 September, with the army operation finally ending some days later.

The Debate in Parliament

■ Parliament finally resumed on 24 September, the date originally agreed to at adjournment in June, but since protested by an opposition anxious to debate both the Oka dispute and the Gulf crisis. Joe Clark presented a motion for the House's approval which condemned the invasion of Kuwait, supported all relevant UN Security Council resolutions since then, and supported the dispatch of Canadian Forces to take part in the multinational military effort.

During the lengthy debate that followed, the opposition parties focussed their objections on the fact that Parliament had not been recalled earlier to debate the motion and on the need for the government to adhere strictly to United Nations-sanctioned mea-

sures. Thus the Liberals presented an amendment which called on Canadian Forces to enforce the UN resolutions, while the NDP urged an amendment "that Canada work at the Security Council to seek assurances that no country will undertake offensive military operations against Iraq unless they are under UN command and explicitly authorized by the Security Council."

Ultimately, after discussions between the Liberals and Conservatives, a new motion was presented on 19 October which included an undertaking by the government "to present a further motion to this House in the event of the outbreak of hostilities involving Canadian Forces in and around the Arabian Peninsula." This motion was agreed to in a vote on 23 October of 170 to 33, with most of the NDP and a handful of dissident Liberals and the Bloc Québécois voting against.

Committee Work

■ The House motion was referred to the House Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, which had already begun a series of hearings on the Gulf crisis. Joe Clark and Defence Minister Bill McKnight appeared before it on 25 October. There Clark declared that "Canada is ready to use force to get Iraq out of Kuwait, even without UN approval." This prompted a spate of questions in the House that afternoon, with the opposition parties expressing strong disapproval of such a course. The Committee will seek to report to the House before Christmas.

In addition to its work on the Gulf crisis, the House Committee also held hearings on 16 and 18 October on the renewal of the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) agreement with the United States, whose current five-year term ends in the spring of 1991. Thereafter, a sub-

committee was established under the chairmanship of Walter McLean. The sub-committee called for submissions from various interested groups on the question of NORAD renewal and commissioned a paper by a small group of outside experts. It is hoped that the sub-committee will report its recommendations to the full Committee some time in December.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment tabled its fourth report entitled *No Time to Lose: The Challenge of Global Warming* on 17 October. It called for Canada to cut its emissions of carbon dioxide by at least twenty per cent by 2005. The government had not yet staked out its position on carbon-dioxide cuts for the World Climate Conference that was held in Geneva, 29 October to 6 November. The report contained sixteen other recommendations, including a strong admonition that "energy policy-making must have as its most immediate focus the more efficient and conserving use of energy."

Shadow Cabinets

■ Both opposition parties reorganized their shadow cabinets. The Liberal critic for External Affairs is Lloyd Axworthy, for Defence, William Rompkey and for Environment, Paul Martin. In addition, Warren Allmand took responsibility for Disarmament and Arms Control, Christine Stewart for CIDA. Liberal Leader Jean Chrétien also organized a series of caucus committees, including ones on External Affairs and Defence, chaired by Lloyd Axworthy, and Sustainable Development, chaired by Paul Martin.

New Democratic Party Leader Audrey McLaughlin named British Columbia MPs Svend Robinson as External Affairs critic and John Brewin as Defence critic, while Jim Fulton remained responsible for the Environment. □

— GREGORY WIRICK