

EIR: Aren't you afraid that the U.N. intervention would lend itself to a foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Colombia?

Cepeda: No, because the U.N. action to verify the agreements is a quiet intervention, it is almost a matter of a secret action.

EIR: But the U.N. is an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. The U.N. massacred Iraq, invaded Somalia, granted the Serbs permission to carry out ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, and is starving the Haitians to death. . . .

Cepeda: But there are many different interests in the United Nations other than those of the United States. Note that the intervention of the United Nations in El Salvador and in Nicaragua was very positive. In El Salvador, with the peace process. In Nicaragua, the U.N. achieved the demobilization of the Contras.

EIR: But an intervention of the United Nations would lead to U.S. troops intervening in the country by putting on blue helmets. . . .

Cepeda: Military intervention in the country is already a fact. The DEA [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration] is already here, there are innumerable U.S. military advisers, there are U.S. bases in San José del Guaviare, there are U.S. bases in Amazonas. We already have U.S. intervention here, there is already interventionism. On the other hand, an official U.N. intervention could be a positive intervention.

EIR: In El Salvador, an intervention of 10,000 people was required. How many U.N. agents will have to intervene in Colombia?

Cepeda: This remains to be resolved. Colombia is a very large, very complex country with a much more difficult guerrilla process. Here, the central issue is how many people will it take to verify compliance with the agreements between the government and the guerrillas.

EIR: So the U.N. intervention in Colombia will be more prolonged than in El Salvador?

Cepeda: Yes, in Colombia the process will be much more difficult, and much slower than in El Salvador. There, the guerrillas took 10 years. Here, it has half a century.

EIR: Do you think the new Clinton government favors negotiations between the government and the guerrillas?

Cepeda: I'm not going to stick my neck out to defend Clinton.

EIR: But the Inter-American Dialogue organization, which is handling Clinton's foreign policy, proposes using the political weight of the United States to resolve conflicts in every country through negotiations.

Cepeda: Well, that position could be positive.

Mulroney resigns, as Canadian crisis grows

by Gilles Gervais

On Feb. 24, 1993, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced his resignation as head of the Conservative Party, thereby becoming the seventh prime minister in Canadian history (since the beginning of Confederation in 1867) to quit his duties as head of Her Majesty's government while still in office.

Among the former prime ministers who resigned, only three were forced to do so citing "ill health": John Abbott (June 1891), Robert Borden (July 1920), and Mackenzie King (November 1948).

Mulroney's exit from politics had less of the theatrics of his predecessor, the flamboyant Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who suddenly quit the prime ministership in early March 1984, coming to his final abrupt decision during a famous wintry midnight walk in the woods.

Mulroney's decision did not come as a total surprise, but it did come a few weeks after he had assured his cabinet and fellow Canadians that there was no basis whatsoever to the rumors of his imminent departure and that he would lead his Conservative Party troops in the next federal elections.

Conservative Party insiders are now pondering how to come up not only with a candidate who can unify the party at the national convention in June, but with one who will be able to hold on to power in the upcoming elections, given that the Conservatives have been stuck below 21% in the popularity polls for the last three years.

They will be looking for a new Conservative Party leader (who will then become prime minister, under the parliamentary system) who will be able to avoid the fate of the Liberal Party's John Turner, the Bay Street lawyer and prime minister (briefly) who lost badly to Mulroney's Conservatives in the 1984 general elections that followed Trudeau's resignation. The Conservatives are hoping to replicate the exploit of Great Britain's John Major in salvaging an unpopular government.

The Mulroney legacy

Under the tenure of Mulroney, the Canadian economy has posted records for financial and physical hardship, while the social and political structure has become increasingly fragmented. The three-year-old U.S.-Canada Free Trade

Treaty has had a devastating impact in Canada, with at least 350,000 Canadian jobs lost. In the prairie provinces, the Minneapolis-based food cartel companies have repositioned their grain facilities—elevators, shipping logistics, etc.—across the U.S.-Canadian border, to undercut independent farmers on both sides. The Canadian Wheat Board is insolvent.

Meanwhile, the vaunted financial empires of Olympia and York real estate, Bramalea, and other famed Canadian-based companies, are bankrupt. Fully 15% of the value of the Toronto stock exchange has been wiped out over the past two years, as Anglo-American money speculation operations collapsed in the world depression.

Canada is wracked by federal and provincial budget crises. In response, Mulroney took such actions as the sweeping Goods and Services Tax (GST), which has cut deep into living standards and slowed economic activity as a whole.

In the face of this real decline in the Canadian economy, it is revealing how the City of London has lauded Mulroney's term in office. The *Financial Times* of London, in an editorial on Feb. 25, praised the Canadian prime minister, saying he "may well turn out to have laid the foundation for a new era of Canadian prosperity." As for the fact that only 14% of Canadians say they approve of Mulroney, it argued that they have an "unfair" perception of Mulroney's policies as being responsible for their personal economic hardships. "Most of the causes of the recession lay outside the prime minister's control," the paper claimed. The London newspaper backed the not-yet-ratified North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and the imposition of the hated Goods and Services Tax, as among Mulroney's successes.

Mulroney said in a recent interview with the Cable News Network that his government would ratify the NAFTA accord before the end of the parliamentary session in June, when he steps down.

Key among Mulroney's achievements, the *Financial Times* continued, "has been to hold the federation together during a period which has seen three federal states in Europe break up," referring to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

Mulroney did yeoman service for the Anglo-American free-trade cause when, in December 1988, he hosted the mid-term session of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in Montreal. The 10-day affair was staged with great pomp and ceremony, covered by close to 1,000 journalists. However, despite the theatrics, the negotiations ended in deadlock when continental Europe, especially France, refused to yield to the Anglo-American demands for cutting government subsidy to agriculture.

On the thorny issue of Canada's national debt, the largest per capita debt among industrialized nations, the federal government has just been taken off the hook at the March 1 joint press conference given by Canada's three New Democratic

Party (Socialist International) provincial premiers, who represent 14 million Canadians out of total of 28 million. Ontario's Bob Rae, Saskatchewan's Roy Romanow, and British Columbia's Mike Harcourt jointly called "for a national debt-management program with the provinces taking the lead because of a political vacuum at the federal level," reports the *Financial Post* of Toronto.

On the issue of Quebec's separation, Quebec nationalists view the departure of Mulroney as the end of a 25-year policy designed to keep Quebec in Canada by putting a French-speaking Quebecer in Ottawa (starting with Trudeau in 1968) to placate the Quebec population and antagonize the nationalists. Their view is that an Anglophone prime minister from outside Quebec will accelerate the separation of Quebec from Canada.

The unique combination of support from western Canada and Quebec, which provided Mulroney with two majority governments over the last eight and a half years, has now disintegrated. Regional parties in the prairie states and in Quebec will split the vote and probably result in a minority government in Ottawa this autumn.

The British calculations

While the British may publicly praise Mulroney (and while he was in office, they could be assured of control over this Quebec-raised, French-speaking Catholic prime minister of Irish descent), it simply did not make any sense to keep Mulroney in the political picture in the post-Reagan-Bush-Thatcher era. For British Canada, Mulroney was put in place to be a sounding board for the second Reagan administration. Under President George Bush, Conservative Brian Mulroney was always there standing by, ready to give a helping hand in facilitating the implementation of all aspects of the "new world order," including its free-trade component.

With the coming to power of Democrat and Rhodes Scholar President Bill Clinton, a more appropriate candidate for the Canadian prime ministership would have to be found, in the British view—someone like the present leading Conservative Party contender, Kim Campbell, a legal scholar who studied in London, plays the 'cello, and is fluent in Russian.

The British elites have fixed the electoral process such that an option always exists for a new Canadian prime minister to be elected in concert with the United States presidential race. Given the fact that Canada operates according to the British parliamentary system, there is a flexible electoral calendar; elections are usually called after a government has been in power for four to five years, and that timetable can be adjusted as the need arises. If a new U.S. President is judged not to be malleable enough to adopt British policies, then the British will resort to using the Canadian prime minister and/or his British counterpart in some combination of a "Mutt-and-Jeff" routine capable of handling a recalcitrant American President.