

# Learning the hard way

**T**hat Canada's socialist party, the NDP, should be doing well of late in the polls, media and byelections should come as no surprise. After all, Canada has been a socialist nation since Pierre Trudeau.

Brian Mulroney's misnamed Progressive Conservatives have done almost nothing to alter this trend. The NDP is not even really rising in public esteem: The incredibly inept Tories and Liberals are simply sinking out of sight, leaving the NDP alone and quite obvious, like the hulk of an old rusted ship uncovered by an unusually low tide.

Now, while Mulroney and John Turner stare in mute horror as their parties implode and crumble, the voice of the NDP is being heard across the land. A voice that is strangely dulcet, promising good fellowship, jobs, caring and goodies for almost everyone except, of course, taxpayers.

The old NDP cries for nationalization, union power, unilateral disarmament, high taxes, more bureaucrats and leftist neutralism have been stilled. Such demands scare voters, so the NDP has opted for the Sandinista approach—sound moderate until you're in power and then get back at the capitalist swine and their Yankee paymasters.

But you can't keep the old NDP of socialist anthems and red banners down. Out popped the NDP demand that Canada pull out of NATO and—watch this—“defend Canada.” How interesting it is to see the party that until lately urged disarmament now waxing martial and belligerent.

As long as Canada and its allies were only threatened by the Soviet Union, the NDP wanted no part of things military. Now, however, the NDP has concluded that armaments are necessary, yes even vital, to defend the nation against—guess who? Right, the wicked Americans who are even now plotting to steal our northern icebergs, drink up our water and ravish our virgins.

The message from the NDP's Politburo: Let's ditch NATO and turn our guns against the Ameri-

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cans. Of course, they don't put it quite so bluntly, but that's exactly what they mean when they speak of pulling out of NATO to “defend our Arctic.” Are U.S. warships shelling Kangiqsujuaq? Are the Marines about to storm ashore at Pangnirtung? (The southern border does not count in this socialist threat scenario.)

Listening to such flaggab, one must conclude that the NDP Sandinistas are either stunningly ignorant of the world's ways or else damned and determined to turn Canada into a northern Nicaragua. Let's be nice and assume the former.

Suppose Canada did pull out of NATO and become a neutral socialist nation like those idols of the NDP, Sweden and Finland. A rightly angry U.S. might just tell Canada to go jump in the Arctic. Kiss goodbye \$2 billion in military exports to the U.S., and thousands of jobs in Ontario; ditto for the Auto Pact. Washington will say to the NDP: Okay, big mouths, go defend yourselves and if you can't, we will stake out the high Arctic.

Defending the Arctic will require patrol aircraft, surface vessels, perhaps a few non-nuclear subs, air and naval bases, more radar, roads, communications—in short, billions and billions in military investment. Since the NDP is committed to higher spending on social welfare, daycare, education and a host of bureaucratic monstrosities, where will it find the cash?

Pulling a brigade out of Europe will add precisely zero to our ability to even police, not to mention defend, the Arctic. And what about our air and maritime defences, jobs now being done and paid for by Uncle Sam?

Obviously, the NDP seems to care not a jot for Canada's oft-stated commitment to maintaining western democracy, nor for helping, however feebly, to maintain the freedom of Europe, which is our cultural, political and moral homeland. Nor for the more mundane matters of our trade relations with NATO members or Canada's image in the world.

No, comrades, all this will be jettisoned in favor of neutralism and defending our sacred north against Yankee imperialism. So what if neutrals, like Belgium or Holland, are always the first to be overrun in wars or that not one NDP stalwart in a thousand could draw a map of Canada's Arctic?

We'll be hearing a lot more from the promoters of neutrality and anti-Americanism in coming months. These siren calls are as alluring and just as phony as claims by the socialists that more big government, higher taxes and more regulations will bring us prosperity and happiness.

In Europe, sensible voters have given their own homegrown left-wingers, who advocated similar daft policies, a hard kick in the pants. Our allies already know what we have yet to learn.