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CANADIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE LONDON OZONE LAYER CONFERENCE

SUMMARY

1. THE LONDON CONFERENCE ON SAVING THE OZONE LAYER HAS BEEN WIDELY AND WELL REPORTED IN THE CANADIAN MEDIA, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT, THE UNANIMITY OF DELEGATES' AGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR ACTION AND THE PROBLEMS THIS POSED FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

DETAIL

2. ALL THE MAJOR CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE GIVEN EXTENSIVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE TO THE CONFERENCE, AND NATIONAL NETWORK TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS PROGRAMMES HAVE CARRIED LEAD STORIES. THE TONE OF THE REPORTING WAS SET BY THE PROMINENCE GIVEN TO MRS THATCHER'S CALL FOR EFFECTIVE, GLOBAL ACTION TO PREVENT FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE OZONE LAYER AND MOST WERE AGREED THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS EFFECTIVE IN HIGHLIGHTING THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM. THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR IT ALSO RECEIVED WIDE COVERAGE. THE ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE IN EXTENDING SUPPORT FOR THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL WAS NATURALLY EMPHASISED, AS WAS MRS THATCHER'S CALL FOR MORE COUNTRIES TO SIGN THE PROTOCOL. MOST OF THE ARTICLES AGREED THAT A PARTICULAR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN TO ENCOURAGE A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHICH HAD NOT ALREADY DONE SO TO SIGN OR CONSIDER SIGNING THE PROTOCOL.

3. THE GLOBE AND MAIL GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE CFCS: THE PAPER'S SYMPATHIES HOWEVER WERE FIRMLY WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES' AFFIRMATION THAT GOVERNMENTS COULD AND SHOULD CHALLENGE THE POWER OF INDUSTRIAL LOBBIES WHICH IGNORED MATTERS OF GLOBAL CONCERN.

4. A MAJOR THEME OF THE REPORTING HERE WAS THE PROBLEM OF HOW

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MIGHT PURSUE THE AIM OF ELIMINATING THE USE OF CFCs WITHOUT SLOWING THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. PRESIDENT MOI'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS WAS REPORTED IN THIS CONTEXT, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS WIDELY QUOTED ON THE NEED TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE PRINCE OF WALES ON HIS SUGGESTION THAT COSTS INCURRED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE MET THROUGH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: THE STATEMENTS BY THE CHINESE AND INDIAN DELEGATES IN THIS SENSE WERE ALSO GIVEN PROMINENCE. DESPITE THE DEPTH OF DEBATE, SOME COMMENTATORS PORTRAYED A GENERAL UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW THE INDUSTRIALISED WORLD COULD BEST ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

5. THE GLOBE AND MAIL'S LONDON CORRESPONDENT WAS ALONE IN QUESTIONING THE UNDERLYING MOTIVES FOR THE CONFERENCE AND HE CHANGED HIS TUNE AS THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDED. THE GENERAL TENOR OF COMMENT WAS ONE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR A SERIOUS EXERCISE, WHICH HAD PRODUCED REAL ACHIEVEMENTS. SOME COVERAGE WAS GIVEN TO THE CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONFERENCE AND THE PARTICIPATION OF WINEGARD, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

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