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# Canada's New Democratic Party: Heading for a Split?

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**An Intelligence Assessment**

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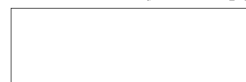
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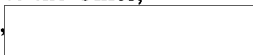
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# Canada's New Democratic Party: Heading for a Split?



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**An Intelligence Assessment**

This paper was prepared by   
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**Canada's New Democratic Party:  
Heading for a Split?**



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**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 1 October 1983  
was used in this report.*

The small, socialist New Democratic Party (NDP) has played an important behind-the-scenes role in Canadian politics over the past two decades. Although it has been in only one government, the NDP has strongly influenced the direction of federal policy since 1961 as Canada's "Third Party," behind the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives. The NDP has supported or sponsored much of the social welfare legislation adopted by the Liberals, for example, and has been the leading exponent of nationalist economic programs designed to free the Canadian economy from what it sees as excessive US influence.

The New Democrats, however, are now beset with internal problems that threaten the party's existence. The deep differences within the party reflect the sharply divergent approaches of the NDP's eastern-based leadership and the party's western wing, which elects most of the party's parliamentary delegation. The easterners advocate policies that would require an increase in federal power; the western wing, on the other hand, advocates a devolution of power to the provinces. Moreover, the NDP leadership's willingness to cooperate with the Liberals has rankled many westerners who consider Prime Minister Trudeau anathema. In addition, the Liberals' predilection for co-opting New Democratic policies tends to widen the east-west rift in the party by forcing the NDP's leadership to adopt more stridently socialist policies in an effort to differentiate the NDP from the Liberals.

Although we think the NDP will hold together through the next federal election—likely to take place in fall 1984—the party's prospects after that appear uncertain. If the NDP does badly, as most polls now predict, it may fragment into an eastern-based radical socialist party and a western populist organization that probably would affiliate with the Liberal Party in the post-Trudeau era. Because the NDP now holds 25 of the 76 federal parliamentary seats in western Canada, such a merger would greatly enhance the Liberals' electoral prospects in the region where they now hold only two seats. We believe that an alliance with the NDP's western wing also would permit the Liberals to construct, for future elections, a nationwide base of support that would be very difficult for the Progressive Conservatives to challenge successfully. We would expect that such an alliance would marginally increase the stridency of the nationalist emphasis of Liberal foreign, economic, and energy policies, but that these alterations would be more a matter of tone than substance.



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**Table 1**  
**Canadian Federal Elections: The New Democratic Party**

	New Democratic Party Vote	NDP Share of Total Popular Vote (percent)	Members of Parliament	
			Elected	Geographical Distribution
1962	1,036,853	13.5	19	British Columbia 10, Manitoba 2, Ontario 6, Nova Scotia 1
1963	1,037,857	13.5	17	British Columbia 9, Manitoba 2, Ontario 6
1965	1,381,047	18.0	21	British Columbia 9, Manitoba 3, Ontario 9
1968	1,390,221	17.4	22	British Columbia 7, Manitoba 3, Ontario 6, Saskatchewan 6
1972	1,700,000	18.1	31	British Columbia 11, Manitoba 3, Northwest Territories 1, Ontario 11, Saskatchewan 5
1974	1,476,350	15.1	16	British Columbia 2, Manitoba 2, Nova Scotia 1, Ontario 8, Saskatchewan 2, Northwest Territories 1
1979	2,064,937	18.0	26	British Columbia 8, Manitoba 5, Ontario 6, Nova Scotia 1, Saskatchewan 4, Newfoundland 1, Northwest Territories 1
1980	2,164,987	20.0	32	British Columbia 12, Manitoba 7, Ontario 5, Saskatchewan 7, Northwest Territories 1

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### Canada's New Democratic Party: Heading for a Split? [redacted]

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#### Introduction

Canada's socialist New Democratic Party (NDP) has been plagued since its inception in 1961 by a dichotomy: the party program is based on an eastern-socialist-labor political philosophy that stands in sharp contrast to the views of its western-agrarian electoral base (see table 1). These internal tensions were submerged until the severe economic recession of 1981-82 and the political battles surrounding the patriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982.<sup>1</sup> Now, however, intraparty differences are threatening the party's survival as a force in national politics. [redacted]

for its regional differences and the maintenance of clearly defined and mutually accepted lines of demarcation between the prerogatives of the federal and provincial levels of government. They also urged the party to recognize Quebec's right to self-determination. [redacted]

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The NDP and its predecessor, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), were formed by eastern academic intellectuals who hoped to use the party to attract an urban, working-class constituency with which to create a socialist Canada. Ironically, however, the CCF—founded in the depression years of the 1930s—drew its most loyal supporters in the agricultural provinces of western Canada. When the socialist mantle passed to the NDP, it inherited the same configuration—eastern ideological leadership and a predominantly western rank and file. [redacted]

The manifesto was prepared under the direction of Allan Blakeney and Grant Notley, respectively the leaders of the provincial NDP parties in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and published without the knowledge of federal party leader Ed Broadbent. Although Broadbent handled the westerners' demands in a manner that avoided a party split, he was forced to allow the convention to adopt the west's revolutionary and subversive—in terms of traditional NDP doctrine—demands for devolution and respect for regionalism. [redacted]

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#### The Western Roots of Intraparty Strife

The national NDP leadership favors a strong central government with expanded federal powers. Drawn until recently from Ontario's urban intelligentsia, the national leadership has always regarded itself as the party's most forward-looking element and frequently has ignored regional concerns. For many years, westerners suffered this inattention in relative silence. At the party's convention in 1983, however, these resentments came to the fore and western delegates issued a "Western Manifesto" calling for respect for regional interests and a devolution of federal power to the provinces. The westerners concluded that the only basis for change in the Canadian federation is respect

The NDP is stronger electorally in the western provinces than anywhere else; 25 of the 31 members of the party's current parliamentary contingent are from Manitoba, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup> Western delegates at the NDP's convention in 1983 made it clear that the region views party leader Broadbent as "that guy from Oshawa" who is more concerned about industrial strategies for automobiles than about grain and who is willing to support the interests of energy-consuming rather than energy-producing provinces. The westerners, according to the *Alberta Report*, interpret Broadbent's actions as being "for the industrial centre and against the west"—a perception strengthening their belief that party leadership is contemptuous of the west and formulates policies to satisfy the NDP's eastern, unionized constituency. [redacted]

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<sup>1</sup> The process of patriation, which was completed in April 1982, involved the Canadian Government's requesting the British Parliament to enact legislation relinquishing the United Kingdom's control over the amendment of the British North America Act, Canada's constitution, thereby leaving the course of future constitutional change solely in Canadian hands. [redacted]

<sup>2</sup> Although the New Democrats won 32 seats in the election of 1980, one British Columbia NDP seat was lost to the Progressive Conservatives in a byelection in August 1983. The party's federal parliamentary caucus was thereby reduced to a total of 31. [redacted]

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**The Organizational Basis for Socialist Dominance of the NDP**

The organization of the federal NDP provides the basis upon which the party's socialist constituency has been able to dominate the formulation of party policy. The party organization resembles a pyramid whose base consists of 282 constituency associations, one for each of Canada's federal parliamentary districts. An equal number of delegates is sent from each of the constituencies to the NDP's biennial convention where a comprehensive party policy statement is produced. Therefore, the delegates from the lightly populated four western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia) have less influence on the formulation of party policy than those from the other six provinces and two territories. The populist policy interests of the westerners are, as a result, frequently subordinated to the more socialistic proclivities of industrial Canada. [redacted]

In addition to formulating policy, the NDP's national convention also selects a leader, president, associate president, treasurer, and seven vice presidents. These 11 individuals, together with 20 others selected by the convention, become members of the party's Federal Council. The Council implements the convention's

policy resolutions and guides the party in the period between conventions. The entire contingent selected by the convention for the Council generally reflects a socialist rather than a populist orientation simply because of the nonwestern advantage in the geographical distribution of delegates. [redacted]

The remaining members of the Federal Council are selected in the following manner, which also results in the favoring of socialist over western populist interests:

- The leader, president, treasurer, and secretary from each of the 10 provincial and two territorial NDP parties.
- Two additional members from each provincial and territorial party chosen at their respective biennial conventions.
- Two members chosen by the NDP's federal parliamentary caucus.
- One member from each of the 12 labor unions with the largest number of members officially affiliated with the NDP. [redacted]

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Westerners also look with extreme disfavor on the NDP leadership's willingness on occasion to support Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal government. The NDP's support of a Trudeau minority government between 1972 and 1974 raised the hackles of the westerners because they generally believed that cooperation with the Liberals tended to blur the NDP's distinctiveness. That dissatisfaction, however, was largely mollified by the NDP's success in forcing the Liberals to adopt several of its policies, including the creation of a state-owned oil company. The real problem came in 1981 and 1982 when Broadbent endorsed Trudeau's unilateral decision to patriate the Canadian constitution. Provincial NDP parties in the west, headed by Allan Blakeney, then NDP premier of Saskatchewan, opposed Trudeau's constitution because they believed it ignored regional interests and unnecessarily strengthened the central government. The intraparty rift over the constitution widened

when Trudeau backtracked and agreed to consult one last time with the provinces, thereby leaving the federal New Democratic leadership looking like Liberal dupes. [redacted]

The dissatisfaction over the constitution erupted at the party's convention in 1983. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* estimated that up to 40 percent of the delegates would have been willing to dump Broadbent. Most of those delegates were from the west, and many of the names suggested as successors were westerners who had opposed Broadbent's constitutional position in the NDP's federal caucus. [redacted]

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### *The NDP's Unclear Image*

*Throughout its history the NDP has proposed many controversial policies—such as old-age pensions, medicare, and a state-owned oil company—only to have them usurped by the Liberal Party and legislated into place with a Liberal imprimatur. This has had a threefold effect on the NDP:*

- *The party often appears to be nothing more than a stalking-horse that the Liberals manipulate from time to time to test the national political environment. Most recently, for example, the NDP was the first political party to suggest the upgrading of Canada's relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Shortly thereafter, the Liberal government announced its intention to raise its diplomatic contact with the PLO to the ambassadorial level in the fall of 1983.*
  - *Because NDP leaders and members want to maintain an image clearly distinct from the Liberals, the NDP often adopts policies that are either more radical or socialistic than would be the case if the party did not have this concern. The NDP's recent proposal to nationalize one of Canada's five major chartered banks is an example of a policy that probably lacks any significant appeal to the Canadian electorate but clearly differentiates New Democratic financial policy from that of the Liberals.*
  - *Even when the NDP wins enough votes to influence effectively the direction of federal policy, such as in the minority Liberal government situation between 1972 and 1974, it remains in danger of having its most important symbols usurped. In 1974, for example, the NDP forced the Liberals to create the state-owned oil company Petro-Canada. Afterward, the Liberals, through extensive press and television advertisement, made Petro-Canada an important symbol of success for their own party. Such was their effectiveness in this endeavor that Joe Clark's minority Conservative government fell in 1979, in part, because of its attempt to dismantle Petro-Canada. And the Liberals were returned to power in 1980, in part, because they pledged to maintain Petro-Canada as a federal enterprise.*
- 

In their manifesto, western NDP leaders expressed their fear that the party may be annihilated in the next general election by an expected Tory sweep—the Tories led the Liberals by 27 percentage points in the opinion polls in October. NDP leaders suspect, according to US officials, that the public's hostility to Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal Party is so intense that the average voter will support the party most likely to form a majority non-Liberal government. The Tories were last able to form a majority government in 1958, following 22 years of Liberal rule; in that election the CCF, the NDP's predecessor, had its parliamentary contingent reduced from 25 members to eight.

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The manifesto also delineated the western NDP leaders' concern that socialism's appeal in their region is being eroded by the social welfare policies of the Liberal Party. US Embassy officers, for example, expect the Liberals soon to displace the NDP as the second-ranking party in the west behind the Tories. Moreover, in the federal election of 1980, when the Liberals won only two of 76 western seats, they still captured between 22 percent and 28 percent of the popular vote across the region (see tables 2 and 3).

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Western NDP leaders, according to the *Montreal Gazette*, believe that their party's survival in western Canada depends on the federal NDP's program becoming less socialist and more populist—more willing, for example, to support private investment and free enterprise and to demonstrate a greater respect for individuality while not totally abandoning concern for the collective welfare. We believe, however, that western demands for a retreat from traditional NDP ideology, beyond that secured by the adoption of the Western Manifesto in June, would widen the regional conflict in the party and make a formal split inevitable.

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#### **Eastern Canada: Problems and Opportunities**

The NDP will have a difficult time making gains in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. For the party to achieve some success in Ontario and Quebec—which

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**Table 2**  
**Western Canada: Distribution of Major Party Popular**  
**Vote in Federal Elections <sup>a</sup>**

	Liberal Party		New Democratic Party		Liberal and NDP		Tory Party	
	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980
<b>Total</b>	<b>693,124</b>	<b>688,633</b>	<b>808,525</b>	<b>833,355</b>	<b>1,501,649</b>	<b>1,521,988</b>	<b>1,514,027</b>	<b>1,375,150</b>
Manitoba	120,494	133,253	167,770	159,434	288,264	292,687	222,947	179,607
Saskatchewan	106,586	110,517	175,078	165,308	281,664	275,825	201,581	177,376
Alberta	188,228	176,601	84,282	81,755	272,510	258,356	559,516	516,079
British Columbia	277,816	268,262	381,395	426,858	659,211	695,120	529,983	502,088

<sup>a</sup> Data do not include the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

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**Table 3**  
**Western Canada: Distribution of Major Party Popular**  
**Vote in Federal Elections <sup>a</sup>**

Percent

	Liberal Party		New Democratic Party		Liberal and NDP		Tory Party	
	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>47.4</b>
Manitoba	23.5	28.2	30.5	33.7	54.0	61.9	44.0	38.0
Saskatchewan	22.0	24.3	36.2	36.4	58.2	60.8	42.6	39.1
Alberta	22.6	22.8	10.1	10.5	32.7	33.3	67.2	66.6
British Columbia	23.3	22.4	32.0	35.6	55.3	58.0	44.5	41.9

<sup>a</sup> Data do not include the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

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account for two-thirds of Canada's union members— it would have to emphasize leftist policies that the West would find unpalatable. In the case of the rural, resource-based Maritimes, the NDP would have to run on a populist platform not in keeping with the socialist orientation of the present federal leadership.

the party's east-west rift, as the unions have leaned further toward the political left in an attempt to protect their eroding political power and deteriorating economic base. Labor's calls for intensified federal measures to protect domestic manufacturing and increases in deficit spending to fund job creation programs, for example, drew fire from the proponents of the Western Manifesto.

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**Organized Labor.** The NDP has traditionally maintained close ties with unionized Canadian labor— which increased from 24 percent to 31 percent of the Canadian work force between 1960 and 1980 and largely is concentrated in Ontario and Quebec. Labor's recent demands, however, have tended to widen

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**Key NDP Policy Positions**

**Domestic Affairs**

**Economic Policy:**

- Argues strongly for central government intervention in and management of the economy.
- Urges adoption of a national industrial strategy to develop Canada's natural resources and create a domestic processing and manufacturing infrastructure to keep manufacturing jobs in Canada. Would use Crown corporations, on the model of Petro-Canada, to manage resource exploitation.
- Promotes federally mandated reduction in the level of foreign control in Canada's resource and manufacturing industries. Would strengthen the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) to restrict foreign takeovers and initiate periodic postlocation reviews of foreign-owned industries to coerce good corporate behavior.
- Would establish punitive tax rates for foreign companies operating in Canada who fail to invest domestically at a level set by the federal government. Tax penalties also would be established for companies failing to conduct a set amount of research and development activity in Canada. [redacted]

**Energy Policy:**

- Stresses the need for Canadian control of the country's energy industry and national energy self-sufficiency.
- Would "greatly expand" federal involvement in the energy industry and establish predominant federal ownership of the industry as its primary energy policy goal.
- Fully supports National Energy Program (NEP), including retroactive "back-in" provision, and urges increasing the Canadian ownership goal from 50 percent to 75 percent. Urges that the goal be attained in 1985 instead of 1990 as now scheduled.
- Would authorize Petro-Canada to purchase Imperial Oil Ltd., Exxon's Canadian subsidiary, in order to make the state-owned oil company the nation's largest and most powerful oil company. [redacted]

**External Relations**

- Most nationalistic Canadian political party and its foreign policy contains a distinct anti-American tenor.
- Party foreign policy traditionally focuses on disarmament and supports a nuclear freeze and the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Canada. The NDP is the leading opponent of US cruise missile testing in Canada and is the political leader of the domestic peace movement.
- Member of the Socialist International (SI) and uses the membership to gain media exposure with which to alert Canadians to its foreign policy. Party leader Broadbent is a vice president of the SI.
- Condemns US policy in Central America and the Caribbean—equating it with Soviet behavior in Afghanistan—and supports FSLN government in Nicaragua and FDR guerrillas in El Salvador.
- Proponent of North-South dialogue and believes the thrust of Canadian foreign policy should be financial and technical assistance for the Third World. Supports increased Canadian participation in the United Nations, in particular UN-sponsored peacekeeping activities.
- Would curtail the degree of Canada's military cooperation with the United States through such instrumentalities as NATO and NORAD and refocus the national defense effort on the protection of Canada's territorial integrity.
- In bilateral issues with the United States would seek an improved auto pact, protection for domestic manufacturing industries, and Washington's commitment to resolving the acid rain problem. [redacted]

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**Leftist Sentiment in the Canadian Labor Movement**

While we basically concur with the US Embassy's judgment that the Canadian labor movement as a whole remains fundamentally moderate, we also believe that it is showing signs of becoming increasingly sympathetic to leftist leadership. The Toronto Globe and Mail, for example, estimates that about one-third of the delegates at the NDP convention in 1983 supported the policy paper presented by the Ontario NDP's radical "Left Caucus." Among other things, the paper called for the across-the-board nationalization of Canada's industrial and financial infrastructure. In addition, the UAW's Robert White, who was born in the United Kingdom and trained in the British trade union system, has not ruled out labor's breaking with the NDP and forming its own political entity if its demands are not satisfied by the party. [redacted]

In our opinion, the potential for an accelerated move to the left by Canadian labor clearly lies in the dramatic growth and increasing involvement of radical public-sector unions in the labor movement. Union membership concentrations in Canada, according to the Financial Post, shifted throughout the 1970s and early 1980s toward public-sector unions. In early 1983, for example, public-sector unions accounted for 41 percent of the CLC's total membership. Underscoring the vitality of these unions is the continual growth they experienced during the recent recession; major public-sector unions, for example, added 20,000 members in 1982 and another 35,000 members during the first six months of 1983. We believe that the growing size and importance of the public-sector unions in the labor movement is likely to push labor further to the political left and simultaneously aggravate east-west tensions in the New Democratic Party. [redacted]

Labor's major success at the convention in 1983 also alienated many of the western delegates. At labor's behest, party leaders agreed to delete from the convention's policy statement that section of the Western Manifesto calling for an "incomes policy," another name for wage and price controls. Controls of this type are anathema to labor, and the NDP's leadership was unwilling to accept the westerners' demand if it

meant running the risk of an open break between the party and its union supporters. By yielding to labor's objections, the NDP was recognizing the vital importance to the party of union members and the financial support they afford; the influential journal *Saturday Night* estimated in July that union locals provide the federal NDP with \$200,000 annually in affiliation fees—about 20 percent of the party's annual budget—and contribute an additional \$400,000 during national election campaigns. [redacted]

The presence of fewer labor delegates at the NDP's convention in 1983 probably is an indication that labor is reassessing the direction of its political activity, including its association with the NDP. Dennis McDermott, president of the 1.9-million-member Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), pointedly stayed away from the convention this year and, according to the *Financial Post*, says that he is considering a more independent political position for the CLC to combat the public's perception of labor as a mere adjunct of the NDP. Robert White, head of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Canada, also has expressed his intention to involve the labor movement more fully in the Canadian political system—a departure from labor's historic practice of largely remaining on the political sidelines between federal elections—and to seek greater labor representation in the front ranks of the NDP's leadership, particularly the Federal Council. [redacted]

In our judgment, increased political involvement by labor probably will result in the growth of provincial NDP parties in the industrialized areas of central Canada. On the other hand, however, we believe that the economic and political goals of labor are basically incompatible with those of the party's western wing and that the strengthening of the NDP parties in Ontario and Quebec, and the probable correspondent growth in their influence in the federal NDP's councils, will deepen the east-west split in the party. [redacted]

**Ontario.** The federal NDP leadership—probably accurately in our view—sees Ontario, Canada's most industrialized province, as the best foundation for a

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party fully committed to socialism. Most card-carrying NDP members historically have come from Ontario's unionized work force, which now totals nearly 1.2 million members. Ironically, however, NDP leaders have been unable to persuade their supporters in Ontario to cross the line that separates ideological sympathies from a "dollars and cents" pragmatism and vote for the NDP in federal elections. The majority of union members in Ontario has unfailingly supported the federal Liberal Party, which has proved itself generally sympathetic to NDP policies and consistently able to form majority governments willing to implement comprehensive social welfare programs. The most members of Parliament (MPs) that the New Democrats have ever returned from Ontario's 95 electoral ridings, for example, was 11 in 1972; the party elected only five MPs in Ontario in 1980. [redacted]

Despite these problems, however, we believe industrial Ontario holds some promise for the NDP. Ontario's unionized labor force, in both the public and private sectors, is the largest of any Canadian province and, with economic recovery now under way, holds the promise of further expansion. US Embassy officials also expect the provincial NDP party shortly to displace the Ontario Liberal Party as the official opposition in the Ontario legislature, a factor that probably would enhance the party's public image and therefore improve its ability to gather votes in the province for federal NDP candidates in the next general election. In addition, Canada's federal electoral map will be redistricted after the next general election, creating 10 new, labor-oriented, and possibly NDP-oriented, constituencies in Ontario's heavily industrialized Oshawa-Kitchener corridor. [redacted]

*Quebec.* Quebecers have long considered the NDP a prairie-populist movement abetted by eastern anglophone socialist intellectuals—all elements alien to traditional Quebecois society—and have never elected a federal NDP MP. Still, the NDP hopes to exploit the threat posed by the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberal Party's traditional hegemony in Quebec—the Liberals now hold 74 of the province's 75 federal seats. Recent polls indicate, for example, that the Tories could take between 12 and 15 federal seats in Quebec in the next general election. In its policy statement following this year's convention, the NDP

announced plans to compound Liberal difficulties in Quebec by mounting an extensive campaign of its own in the province. We believe that the NDP has some basis for optimism in Quebec simply because there are nearly 1 million unionized workers living in the province. In addition, we believe that the social-democratic policies of the PQ government—which has held power in the province since 1976 and has obtained observer status in the Socialist International—probably have begun to create a constituency in Quebec sympathetic to socialist-oriented programs. [redacted]

Moreover, the NDP's statement this July supporting self-determination for Quebec—one of the demands contained in the Western Manifesto—probably will aid the party's effort to build an effective organization in the province. In the 1980 federal election, the NDP received 268,000 votes in the province—10 percent of the total—and finished second to the Liberals and ahead of the Progressive Conservatives in 39 constituencies. By June 1983, however, polls showed that the party had squandered this support, probably by ignoring the need to build an effective grass-roots organization in Quebec, and had only a 3-percent approval rating. Recognition of this failure, together with the westerners' insistence that the self-determination clause become NDP policy, sparked the party's decision to make a major effort in Quebec. Although the NDP has a long way to go in Quebec—there are now only 12 functioning NDP constituency associations in the province and the provincial NDP has been leaderless since 1981—we believe that its projected campaign in the next election could begin to give it a foothold in the province.<sup>3</sup> [redacted]

<sup>3</sup> In September, NDP hopes of making inroads in Quebec were dealt a setback when the Parti Quebecois announced that it will support, for the first time, a Quebec nationalist party, the Parti Nationaliste, that is going to contest the next general election. The new party and the NDP both profess a similar social-democratic approach to governing. The NDP, however, is tainted for many Quebecers by its traditional support for a strong central government, and the new party probably will gain considerable support from advocates of a degree of autonomy for Quebec. [redacted]

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**The Maritimes.** Canada's Maritime provinces—Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick—constitute another problem region for the NDP. In July the party did not hold a federal seat in the Maritimes and held only two of 204 seats in the four provincial legislatures. The NDP is starting from an even smaller popular base in the Maritimes than in Quebec, having polled only 181,000 votes in the region in the federal election of 1980.

[redacted]

If the NDP is to grow in the predominantly agricultural and resource-based economic environment of the Maritimes, we believe it would probably have to promote populist policies much the same as those supported by the party's western wing—such as a major reduction in the federal government's power to intervene in the exploitation of the provinces' energy resources. Such a policy stance probably would place the Maritime NDP parties at odds with the socialist-labor orientation of the federal leadership and thereby contribute to exacerbating intraparty tensions. In our view, only Nova Scotia's militant coal miners' unions and the rapidly growing Seafarers International Union in Newfoundland would find the party's more radical socialist philosophy attractive.

**Precarious Prospects**

In our opinion, the east-west compromise negotiated at the NDP's convention in 1983 will allow the party to hold together through the next general election, now expected in late 1984. Intraparty strife is likely to continue, however, and we believe that it ultimately will culminate in a formal split in the party along east-west lines. According to US officials, the Liberals' private polling organization believes that the NDP will disintegrate within 10 years—an estimate we find conservative given current circumstances.

[redacted]

**Timing.** In the unlikely event that the NDP should acquire some access to power after the next election by supporting a minority Liberal government, we believe that there would be some worsening of US-Canadian relations. In addition to pushing hard for strengthened economic nationalism and striving to differentiate, if not divorce, Canadian foreign policy goals from those of the United States, the NDP would

probably act to limit the Liberals' ability to modernize Canada's defense forces or upgrade its contribution to NATO. Moreover, we believe that the NDP would attempt to exact from the Liberals, as the price of its support, a revocation of Ottawa's permission for the testing of US air-launched cruise missiles in Canada.

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Although differences between NDP factions would be papered over temporarily in a minority government situation, even if Trudeau remains Liberal leader, such a compromise probably would not last long. NDP leaders would have to steer a middle course between their eastern and western wings to find policy positions that would enable the party to work with the Liberals. We believe that such an arrangement would satisfy neither wing of the party and would result in intensified intraparty conflict after the minority government fell.

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If the NDP does poorly and fails to gain a share of power in the next election, as polls now predict—the party had an approval rating of only 16 percent in November, down from an alltime high of 25 percent in February 1981—we believe that a formal split in the party may come as early as its next biennial convention in the summer of 1985. Recriminations between east and west would abound in the postelection period and, in our view, the westerners would hold the NDP's socialist-labor orientation responsible for the party's setback. At the very least, western NDP leaders like Blakeney and Notley probably would demand the subordination of socialist policies to the more populist policies they advocate, particularly full party support for the further devolution of federal power to the provinces. We believe, however, that the eastern leadership, ever mindful of the importance of organized labor to the party, would balk at western demands and would thereby provoke the westerners into an open, and probably permanent, break with the party.

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**Implications.** A split would leave the party's socialist-labor group concentrated in Ontario and the populist western wing scattered across the four western provinces. In our judgment, the Ontario group would

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Table 4

Number of seats

Western Canada: Distribution of Major Party MPs in Federal Elections <sup>a</sup>

	Liberal Party		New Democratic Party		Liberal and NDP				Tory Party <sup>c</sup>			
	1979	1980	1979	1980	Actual		Potential <sup>b</sup>		Actual		Potential	
					1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>29</b>
Manitoba	2	2	5	7	7	9	9	12	6	5	4	2
Saskatchewan	0	0	4	7	4	7	11	13	10	7	3	1
Alberta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	21	20	21	19
British Columbia	1	0	8	12	9	12	18	21	19	16	10	7


<sup>a</sup> Data do not include the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

<sup>b</sup> The totals in this column represent the number of seats that potentially could have accrued to an NDP/Liberal coalition.


<sup>c</sup> The totals in this column represent the number of Tory seats remaining after subtracting the vote totals of a potential NDP/Liberal coalition from the actual Tory vote without the coalition.



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assume a more radical socialist demeanor and seek to have a national political impact through its union affiliates. We speculate that the socialist faction would advocate many of the policies now espoused by the NDP but would eliminate the party's present policy of promoting the devolution of some power from Ottawa to the provinces. We believe that the Ontario-centered and union-based federal NDP would be highly visible because of its strident socialist rhetoric, its location near the media center of Toronto, and possibilities for at least limited growth in the industrialized areas of central Canada. The likely status of the Ontario NDP party as the province's official opposition also will aid the federal party's electoral prospects in Ontario. In our judgment, however, the federal NDP's attractiveness to the overwhelmingly centrist Canadian electorate probably would be minimal and its influence on the direction and content of national policy would be scant. 

We believe, on the other hand, that after a split the NDP's western wing would be able to secure increased importance on the national political scene through some form of association or, perhaps, amalgamation with the federal Liberal Party. The two

groups currently are fairly close in their domestic policy orientations—especially regarding medicare and national energy policy—and the conflict between them results primarily from the animosity felt by many western New Democrats for what they perceive as Prime Minister Trudeau's insensitivity and antagonism toward the region's interests. In our opinion, the westerners, who have long been denied any significant opportunity to influence NDP policymaking, probably would seek to join the Liberals in some fashion after Trudeau's retirement. 

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We also believe that the Liberal Party's hierarchy would be eager to arrange an alliance with the western wing of the NDP. Such a coalition would benefit the Liberals by giving them a considerable foothold in western Canada where the NDP now holds 25 federal seats. In addition, an alliance would lend the Liberals a certain radical chic that might help refurbish the party's tattered image. We would

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expect that the addition of the western New Democrats to the Liberal Party would marginally increase the stridency of the nationalist emphasis of Liberal foreign, economic, and energy policies, but that these alterations would be more a matter of tone than substance.

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A review of the returns from the four western provinces for the general elections of 1979 and 1980 amply demonstrates why such an alliance would be attractive to the Liberals. In the federal election in 1979, for example, a western NDP-Liberal alliance would have outpolled the Progressive Conservative candidates in 18 of the 56 western constituencies they won. In the federal election in 1980 the total would have been 19 of 48 Conservative constituencies. Such a coalition would have divided the West's seats equally with the Tories in 1979 (38 each) and would have won a majority in the region (47 to 29) in 1980. Only in Alberta would the Tories have won a majority of seats in both elections (see tables 2, 3, and 4).

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We believe that these returns indicate a path along which the Liberals could seek to regain a truly national constituency and one that would permit the western wing of the NDP to find support for some of its policies. In addition, we think that this alliance would give the Liberal Party a long-term advantage in national politics that the Progressive Conservative Party, the only other national party that would remain after the breakup of the NDP, would find extremely difficult to overcome. In our opinion, a western NDP-Liberal alliance could be the boost the Liberals need to begin a new string of election victories similar to the run of successes that has kept them in power for 31 of the 38 years since 1945.

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