

Africa and the Middle East

This region continued to be a major object of Canadian concern during 1977. In part this was due to important developments in Southern Africa and the dramatic events in the Middle East set in motion by President Sadat's initiative in visiting Israel in November. The visit of the Egyptian leader took place not long after the Secretary of State for External Affairs had visited Israel and Egypt. Also, a series of high-level visits between Canada and *francophone* Africa emphasized Canada's continuing and developing interest in that part of the world.

An important new factor in Canadian involvement in this area was Canada's election for a two-year term to the UN Security Council beginning January 1, 1977, since African and Middle Eastern problems largely dominated Security Council deliberations during the year under review.

English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Africa

During 1977 many efforts by the international community were directed towards finding just and internationally-accepted solutions to problems in the remaining areas of white-minority rule in Southern Africa. At the same time, instability increased in the Horn of Africa, and differences among East African countries created tension. The remnants of European colonialism were further reduced with the attainment of independence by Djibouti (the former French Territory of the Afars and Issas).

The main focus of attention in this area continued to be on the problems of South Africa itself and the related questions of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia (South West Africa). Regrettably, despite major efforts by negotiating parties to resolve outstanding differences, the year closed without agreement on formulas that would permit peaceful transition to independence and majority rule for these two territories.

Rhodesia

After the breakdown of the Geneva conference in January 1977, the British and U.S. Governments drew up, in consultation with the major parties involved in the Rhodesian dispute, a comprehensive set of settlement proposals that were to represent a framework for Zimbabwe's independence and to act as a point of departure for further negotiations. The settlement proposals, following earlier British proposals, retained the target date of March 1978 for independence, and also proposed increased British and international involvement in the process of transition. The proposals were published in September and were accepted shortly afterwards by all parties directly concerned, including Ian Smith and the black nationalists. The Canadian Government fully supported the Anglo-American initiatives and indicated its willingness in principle to contribute to an internationally-financed development fund. The independence talks, however, were stalemated towards the end of 1977 over several difficult questions.