

3.0 THE PACIFIC 2000 PROGRAM

3.1. Interventions Prior to Pacific 2000

Canada's involvement with the Asia Pacific area since the Second World involved the following major milestones prior to the establishment of the APFC and Pacific 2000:

- 1950. The initiation of international development via the Colombo Plan. Since 1951 Canada has contributed over \$9 billion in development assistance to Asian countries;
- 1967. Business leaders in the Asia Pacific region formed the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC);
- 1970. Canada established diplomatic relations with China, and subsequently China was the target of greatly stepped up trade development initiatives by Canada;

Largely because of the size and growth of the Japanese economy, and emergence of some "tigers" such as South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, by the late seventies and early eighties it was becoming apparent that the twenty-first century was to become the "Pacific Century". The Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference (1980) was organized and pointed toward the need for "a more balanced and substantive totality of relationships intended to broaden significantly the base of mutual knowledge and appreciation between Canada and countries of the region - a two-way street". It was recognized that "any policy review or program of new departures" should not "turn simply into a new trade offensive" using the traditional trade promotion methods such as trade fairs and missions. Something extra was needed to overcome Canada's Asia Pacific "blind-spot" in areas of Asian language and cultural awareness.

A series of symposia and workshops were held focussing on the region and a Task Force, headed by John Bruk³, was struck in 1982. This culminated in the creation of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada by Act of Parliament in 1984. This was the first (and only) regionally focussed non-governmental body established by Parliament.

In 1987 the Asia-Pacific Task Force tabled its report⁴ suggesting major adjustments in approaches which would improve relationships with Asia.

By this time a consensus had emerged that there was a need for a rapid shift in Canadian

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⁴Asia-Pacific Task Force. Main Policy Paper - "Canada and the Asia-Pacific World: Potential and Prospects" Department of External Affairs. 1987.