

Asia and the Pacific

Diplomatic visits

In April, John Turner, then Minister of Finance, headed a mission to Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Tahsin Bashir, Ambassador and official spokesman of President Sadat, visited Canada at the end of September. The Canadian Government also welcomed Mr. Gad Yaacobi, Israeli Minister of Transport, at the official opening of the Mirabel International Airport. At the end of the year, the Secretary of State for External Affairs confirmed the growing importance that the Government attached to its relations with all Middle Eastern countries by announcing that he would make an official visit to the area early in 1976.

The countries of Asia and the Western Pacific—in addition to possessing a wide variety of forms of government and social structures—include some of the most highly industrialized in the world as well as some of the poorest and least developed. Canada has expanded its trading relations with the former group and has provided important development assistance to the latter. The development-assistance program in the region is Canada's oldest and largest.

During 1975, Canadian interests in the Asian and Pacific region continued to have their main focus, albeit in varying degrees of emphasis within the various sub-regions, on the Canadian foreign policy themes of fostering economic growth, promoting social justice, safeguarding Canadian sovereignty and independence and maintaining peace and security. Canadian economic interests in the region increased, with rising opportunities for trade, investment and joint ventures. Consistent with the Government's policy of diversifying Canada's foreign relations, considerable effort was made to expand and strengthen relations, in particular with Japan but also with Australia, New Zealand, China and Indonesia.