

International events during 1978 placed new and severe stresses upon the complex and often fragile web of institutions and relationships that make up the international system. The appearance of further evidence of increasing global economic and strategic interdependence underlined that no single nation can achieve its goals in isolation from those of other states.

Canada's pursuit of its national aims in their international dimensions during 1978 reflected a continuing recognition of, and respect for, this global reality. During the year, Canada worked closely with other members of the international community both to advance its own interests and ideals and to find acceptable solutions to shared problems -- in areas as diverse as managing the global economy, dealing with threats to peace, pursuing the goal of disarmament, and regulating and sharing the world's maritime resources. Overall, Canada's international activities were guided by an active commitment to support and strengthen the international system.

A review of some areas of primary Canadian interest illustrates these activities.

The Search for Peace

Events in Southeast Asia during 1978 led to a significant growth in political and military tension in the region. The increasing resort to armed force was a cause of serious concern. Abuses of human rights -- of a particularly flagrant nature in Cambodia -- attracted condemnation. Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, followed by China's invasion of northern Vietnam, created serious instability throughout the region. Canada actively supported efforts towards a political solution in the Security Council and elsewhere, but many deep-rooted problems remained to be settled among the concerned parties.

In southern Africa Canada played a leading role in concert with other major Western countries in pursuit of peaceful solutions to the area's racial and decolonization problems. A transition plan offered by five Western countries including Canada, and endorsed by the Security Council, to bring Namibia to independence provided for the establishment of a military and civilian peacekeeping group to supervise elections. Canada also supported efforts to resolve the long-standing Rhodesia issue. As for South Africa, Canada continued to keep its policies under review, in particular those involving commercial relations. The Government issued in April 1978 a code of conduct on employment practices for Canadian companies operating in South Africa to underline Canada's opposition to apartheid and to encourage the practice of racial equality.

In the Middle East, Canada warmly welcomed the negotiation process resulting from the Camp David accords and encouraged Israel's Arab neighbours to join in the negotiations. In the light of development in Iran, Canada took steps to protect its citizens there and to develop effective working relations with the new Government.