

# Canada Reports

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## Minister visits four Middle East countries

Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark made an official visit, April 3-14, to four Middle East countries — Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel — to discuss major international and bilateral issues including peace, trade and aid with their leaders. It was Mr. Clark's first visit to the area since he became External Affairs minister.

Prior to his visit, Mr. Clark said that he did not expect any dramatic changes in Canada's foreign policy in the Middle East as an outcome of his tour. He said it was important for Canada "to be available to do what we can in advancing" the peace process. He added that Canada would "continue to support actively all serious efforts to bring some resolution to the instability" in the area.

Mr. Clark also said that trade and foreign policy are "inextricably linked" and he emphasized that "there is an investment potential in the Middle East that has not been adequately explored". Canada exported some \$3-billion worth of goods and services to the Middle East and North Africa in 1984.

In light of recent requests for increases in Canadian development assistance to some Middle East countries, Mr. Clark said he wanted to examine the situation himself. Egypt is one of the largest recipients of Canadian foreign aid in the Middle East which amounted to some \$200 million in the past ten years.

### Agreement with Jordanians

During his visit to Jordan, April 3-6, Mr. Clark met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Taher

Masri and with Crown Prince Hassan who accepted Mr. Clark's invitation to make an official visit to Canada.

The two foreign ministers signed a trade and economic co-operation agreement which Mr. Clark said "should move our economic co-operation forward" so that Canada and Jordan could "work together in such sectors a mining, transportation, telecommunications and energy".

The Canadian minister added "that part of the process involved in achieving stability in any region is to encourage some kind of durable economic development".

Mr. Clark praised Jordan's efforts in the search for a just and lasting resolution of the Middle East conflict. "Your commitment to moderation, in a world of increased stridency, must be applauded and supported," he said.

While maintaining that the Palestinians must be involved in any lasting peace plan,

Canada has no plans to change its long-standing policy of limited contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). "I don't think a dramatic change in regard to the PLO would be helpful in these circumstances," he said.

Mr. Clark also stressed that Canada would continue to help create conditions and contribute to conditions "that will make it possible for the parties in the Middle East to achieve a resolution". Canada's support for United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) activities in the area will continue to receive strong support from Canada as part of this commitment.



Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark accepts a gift from students at the UNRWA school in Jordan.

