

# Visit to Asia

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ON January 12 I returned to Ottawa from a nine weeks' goodwill tour of some 14 countries in South and South-East Asia and Australasia. From beginning to end—from Manila to Karachi—this 40,000-mile journey was an inspiring and unforgettable experience.

As I look back over the crowded and busy days I have spent in this ancient and colourful part of the world, my mind is filled with many vivid memories: of the endless variety of Asia's climate and terrain; of the ability and determination of its leaders; the friendliness and simplicity of its villagers; the nobility of its historic monuments; the splendor and wisdom of its age-old cultures; and, finally, the rich diversity of its peoples who are united as never before in an epic struggle to build a better life for themselves and for their children.

## How It Started

Early last autumn the Prime Minister and my colleagues in the Government asked me to represent Canada at the Ministerial Consultative Conference of the Colombo Plan which was to be held at Wellington, New Zealand, in the first part of December. At the same time it was suggested that I might take advantage of such a long journey to visit many of the countries in South and South-East Asia with which Canada has growing and friendly ties but with which we have not had as close contact in the past as have many other nations whose history is longer than our own. That such a trip could serve other useful purposes was apparent from the outset. It was thought that the visit of a Canadian Cabinet Minister to the Canadians serving on our delegations on the International Supervisory Commissions in Indochina would have an encouraging effect on their morale and would help in focusing considerable public attention in Canada on the useful work they are doing to stabilize the situation in this troubled area. The Canadian Government also recognized that a trip which included visits to the Asian members of the Commonwealth who are now playing a more prominent role in world affairs would provide valuable opportunities for discussion with their leaders and an occasion to inspect Canadian Colombo Plan activities in these countries. As preparations for the trip went forward during October, it gradually became clear that in the light of the strains placed upon relations between certain Commonwealth countries by the Suez crisis, such a visit to member nations of the Commonwealth in Asia and Australasia would take on a significance which could by no means have been fully appreciated at the time the trip was originally conceived.

On a cold and bitter November 11 we set out from Ottawa, journeying westward towards the Pacific through San Francisco to Hawaii, where we inspected the large and impressive naval installations at Pearl Harbour, headquarters of the gigantic Pacific Command of the United States Navy.