

A Growing Role for Canada

By 1945 there were 26 Canadian posts abroad. The end of the war saw the emergence of a new Canada. It was strong in both economic and military terms, confident and ready to assert itself on the world stage.

It was a special moment in history. Europe was in disarray. Asia and Africa were just beginning their progress toward independence. The parameters of the Cold War were unclear and the U.S. was uncertain about the implications of its role as Western leader.

Canada often found itself in a crucial role: between the new world and the old, between the developed and the developing. At the United Nations, in the new Commonwealth, or in the formation of a new Western alliance to stem the Soviet advance in Europe, Canada found an active and important role.

The Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to Lester B. Pearson for his work in helping to resolve the Suez crisis in 1957 stands as a reminder of Canada's contributions to international peace and security.

A Changing World

The sixties and seventies brought new challenges as Canada adapted its foreign policy to a changing international scene.

The Department grew, incorporating services from other departments in an attempt to coordinate the full range of Canada's relations with the outside world.

In 1981, the responsibility for immigration programs abroad was transferred to the Department together with the foreign service staff of what was then known as the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. This sector was with the Department for ten years, eventually returning to Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 1991.

After a major government reorganization in 1982, the international trade policy and trade promotion functions of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, including the Trade Commissioner Service, were transferred to the Department, greatly expanding its mandate.

Today more than 7,000 Canadian and foreign personnel serve at home and abroad. Since 1994, we have been known as the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.