

In 1984, the new Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney gave priority to improving Canada's relations with the United States. At the same time, the department pursued a range of initiatives, opposing apartheid in South Africa, championing human rights in Central America and fostering cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Another focus was economic and trade policy. This led to the 1989 Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement and its successor, the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—now a cornerstone of Canada's prosperity. Canadian negotiators were also active in efforts

to transform the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the forerunner of the World Trade Organization.

The end of the Cold War brought a wider agenda, including emerging issues such as environmental degradation, failed states and terrorism.

In 1993, the government changed hands and the department received a new name: the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Fiscal constraints in the 1990s forced the department to concentrate on its core responsibilities of an effective foreign and trade policy, trade promotion and consular services. It



In September 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, where Canadian diplomats are working with aid workers, soldiers and police officers in support of the Afghan government's efforts to rebuild the war-torn country.