

Asia/Pacific community can only be realized if Canadians on the one side and Asians on the other know a great deal more about each other. This sustained program of action is aimed at developing a more balanced and substantive totality of relationships intended to broaden significantly the base of mutual knowledge, appreciation and respect between us. The basic objective is to build a sense of confidence in Canada and in our firm and continuing commitment to the area. It is our conclusion that, over time, such a pattern could significantly increase two-way understanding and would probably give Canada a greater opportunity to be considered as a serious partner for economic and political co-operation. In concrete and specific terms, no one does business with a stranger and no one seeks political solutions to regional or global problems with partners in whom one has limited trust and confidence because of limited knowledge.

**Increasing
relevance**

In reviewing the present state of affairs I think it is safe to say that it is now widely accepted that the Asia/Pacific region has acquired an increasing relevance for Canadians. In many ways this is a reaffirmation of the historic westward thrust of Canadian development. In contemporary terms, as the markets of Asia attract greater attention as a result of increasingly important economic developments in Western Canada, it is as desirable as it is inevitable that the East-West dimension of the Canadian outlook should be strengthened. Call it Third Option, if you will, the fact of the matter is that Canada is more and more looking westward, within itself, and beyond to the world of the Pacific. This has obvious and important consequences for foreign policy formulation and for the public attitudes on which these policies ultimately rest.

Considerations such as these have brought us to the conclusion that a renewed emphasis on the system of our bilateral relationships will be increasingly necessary during the decade on which we have embarked. And nowhere is the potential usefulness of a bilateralism emphasis in developing relationships more evident than in the Asia/Pacific world. There appears to be widespread agreement about the significance and desirability of Canada's westward foreign policy thrust; there is also a general sense of dissatisfaction that the potential has not been fully exploited and that we are not doing as well in this part of the world as we might. In attempting to analyze "what is missing" I would like to touch briefly on some of the expectations of the countries in the Asia/Pacific community, on the Canadian environment and finally on the experience of two of our major partners in the region, as well as competitors, Japan and Australia.

What is missing

One major objective of most nations in the Asia/Pacific region is to obtain a strong commitment from countries such as Canada to provide firm, substantive and public support for their integrity, stability and economic wellbeing. But their expectations go far beyond that basic point. They also have a rich cultural and historical heritage of which they are justifiably proud and they expect others to understand and appreciate that fact. This understanding is essential in Canada if we are to be successful in having these countries look at us in a way which will support Canadian aspirations.

Within Canada the principal historical influences have been of European origin. That fact continues to colour our society. Elementary and high school curricula across