

A Canadian contingent served in Korea under the aegis of the United Nations, and for many years we participated in all the peace and supervisory commissions in Indochina, including on one occasion with Indonesia. Thus, the concept that Canada, as an active member of the world community, and more particularly as a Pacific nation, had a direct stake in the peace and stability of the Asia/Pacific region, was widely accepted in Canada. Accordingly, when five or six years ago we began to place greater emphasis on our bilateral relations with the countries of the Pacific, we were not newcomers on the scene.

With its long Pacific coastline Canada is very much a Pacific nation. Modern transportation has brought us much closer to all countries in the area. We therefore have a stake in the future of the region. It is for this reason that the Canadian Government considers it has a significant role to play in promoting peace and stability. As economic development is a fundamental prerequisite for stability, Canada is making available development assistance to countries of the region. In the context of the North/South dialogue Canada aims, by the transfer of resources and technology, to help to close the gap between developed and less developed countries. We hope this economic co-operation, too, will serve to strengthen the independence of individual nations in this post-colonial period and evolve into a mutually beneficial commercial relationship. The scope in this area is great because of the promising future of the area, given its wealth of human and natural resources. I should mention too that migrants from Asia are increasingly contributing to the diversity of Canadian culture. Canadian interest, then, in the Pacific is considerable.

Turning specifically to Southeast Asia, our involvement in the region has been overshadowed in the public eye by our participation in the Indochina peace and supervisory commissions. I know that our withdrawal from the commission caused apprehension in some quarters that Canada was losing interest in the region, but I wish to assure you that the reverse was true. After the end of the Vietnam War, Canadian resources and expertise that previously had to be devoted to our commission work, could be put to work more productively in developing and implementing our policy towards the countries of Southeast Asia where Canada had substantial bilateral interests. At the same time we did not overlook the fact that tensions remain in the area, and I know that these tensions, as well as the continued confrontations in the Korean peninsula, are of concern to ASEAN leaders as indeed they are to Canada. Thus, we participate actively in the search for solutions to these tensions by a process of consultation and co-ordination with our friends.

An important aspect of Canada's policy in the Pacific is support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Canada firmly believes in the usefulness of such regional groupings and strongly supports the objective of regional