



Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Chinese Premier Chou En-lai tour the caves at Loyang in the People's Republic of China in October 1973.

In 1979, Flora MacDonald became the first woman to be named secretary of state for external affairs.

In 1988, Canada and the United States signed a bilateral free trade agreement, the precursor of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Here, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signs this later agreement in 1992 as Michael Wilson, Minister for International Trade, looks on.

The department adjusted with difficulty to the demands of the new prime minister, and found itself vying for influence with other government departments as well as Trudeau's own foreign policy advisors. Still, it continued to play a pivotal role in implementing the government's foreign policy agenda. Its expertise was brought to bear in areas as diverse as the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which added more than one million square miles to Canadian territory.

From 1969 on, the government worked to integrate foreign operations abroad. The aim was a single department responsible for foreign policy, aid programs and trade. In January 1982, the Department of External Affairs was amalgamated with the Trade Commissioner Service to form a single foreign and trade ministry, with a new name and a broader mandate.