

Under Pearson and St. Laurent, the department continued to grow as Canada assumed a greater role on the international scene. Missions abroad expanded, especially in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where Canada had not been widely represented.

In 1954, Canada joined the international commissions supervising peace in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos after the French withdrawal. Over the next two decades, almost a third of Canada's diplomats served in this war-torn region.

In 1956, Canada helped resolve the Suez Crisis when Pearson proposed that the United Nations deploy a peacekeeping force. This became the pattern for many UN interventions and inspired Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to pledge Canada's support for a UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo in 1960.

In 1960, the External Aid Office (now the Canadian International Development Agency) was established to administer Canada's overseas

aid programs. It was separate from the department but under the authority of the secretary of state for external affairs.

Pearson became prime minister in 1963. During Quebec's Quiet Revolution, the department worked for a foreign policy that reflected Canada's bilingual character, particularly through closer ties with France and other francophone states.

By 1968, Canada had 93 diplomatic posts abroad, with non-resident accreditation in another 41 countries.

An integrated department

Pierre Elliott Trudeau succeeded Pearson as prime minister in 1968, with a team that he called "new guys with new ideas." Following an extensive review of foreign policy, the new government gave paramount importance to Canada's national interest. It defined the country's foreign policy as "the extension abroad of national policies," especially in the areas of social justice, economic growth and quality of life.