

for better relations with almost all countries, irrespective of political leanings, in an effort to boost trade and isolate the North diplomatically.

Seoul's hosting of the Asian Games last year and its selection as the site for the 1988 Olympics should more than make-up for the loss and the government regards these events as opportunities to show the country in the best possible light to the rest of the world.

The years before Seoul holds the Olympic Games are likely to be decisive for the country's domestic political scene. Chun has pledged to step down in the spring of 1988 to be succeeded by the winner of an electoral college vote. The opposition is calling for direct elections. Following a prolonged period in mid-1987 of violent demonstrations against the government on this issue, Chun has promised open elections and bowed to a number of other opposition demands.

Canada's involvement in the Korean peninsula and with its people began in the late 19th century when Canadian missionaries played an important role in serving Koreans in the fields of education and health care. Official involvement commenced in 1947 when Canada was a member of the United Nations Commission supervising free elections in Korea. Formal recognition followed in 1948. Canada continued to support the political and territorial integrity of the Republic of Korea against the claim of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be the sole legitimate government on the peninsula. Thus, when North Korea attempted reunification by force in 1950, Canada contributed to the United Nations Command. By the time of the armistice in 1953, 26,791 troops had served in Korea with 516 fatalities.

Since that time, Canadian interests in South Korea have stemmed from a desire to ensure continued stability on the Korean peninsula, to foster security in the region and to develop and protect our growing commercial and other bilateral interests. The Canadian Embassy was established in Seoul in 1973.

During the 1980's the bilateral relationship has been strengthened by numerous high level visits, including the exchange of visits by former PM Trudeau (1981) and President Chun (1982). In 1985 Federal Ministers of International Trade, of Fitness and Amateur Sport, of Regional Industrial Expansion and of Finance visited the ROK. In April 1986, President Chun made a stop-over in Vancouver en route to European visits and, as mentioned, Prime Minister Mulroney visited Korea. These federal visits are also complemented by Cabinet-level visits from several provinces. These high level exchanges are reinforced by the presence in Canada of more than 40,000 residents of Korean origin, a constant influx of Korean immigrants, particularly in the entrepreneurial class, and travel by businessmen, families and, increasingly, tourists.