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Canada seeks to increase links with Pacific nations

A major international challenge for Canada in the decade ahead will be to respond to the "remarkable pattern of growth" of the Pacific region, said Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan in a speech to the Canadian Club and the Canadian University Association in Hong Kong, July 2. Excerpts from the speech, which discussed Canada's interest in increasing links with the Pacific region, follow:

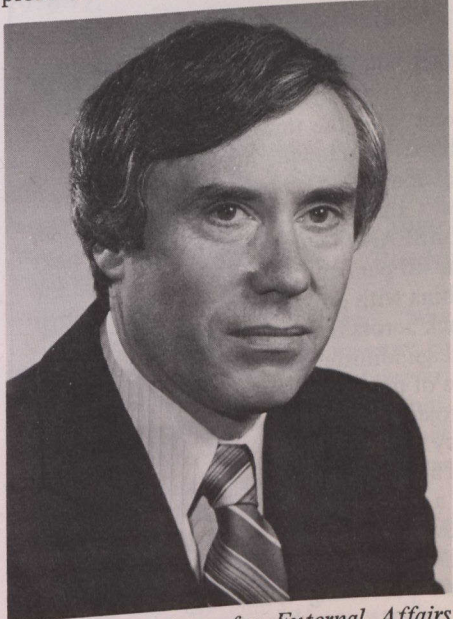
...In many parts of Canada, our traditional orientation has been towards a primary role as an Atlantic nation. But we are now beginning to see an awareness in Canada of a dual personality as both an Atlantic and a Pacific nation, and an educational process in this direction is now taking place. Perhaps one day soon a larger number of Canadians will see Hong Kong as part of the "Near West".

But if one-half of Canada's challenge lies in developing an awareness of its Pacific personality, the other half will lie with formulating policies and implementing programs which will make this personality more manifest....

No development in recent years so exemplifies a recognition of the coming Pacific age than the current move to explore the concept of a tangible "Pacific

Community". I doubt that anyone has a clear concept of what shape such a Community will eventually take. But Canada intends to participate in the evolution of the concept from the outset. We have not made up our minds about any of the specifics of organization, membership or mandate, and we will approach the idea cautiously, but nonetheless in a positive fashion. Undoubtedly, the process of study and evolution will take time. But this may be well, since a good deal of community-building must precede any formal organization. Such matters as the improvement of transportation and communications links, tourism development and increased cultural and educational interplay are essential before tackling the economic issues which lie at the heart of the Community's potential dynamic. For Canada and [its] Pacific partners, the achievement of the Pacific Community is a longer-term, general goal. In the interim, we must nourish and expand the bilateral relationships which are the foundations of such a concept. And for this purpose, Canada intends to inject new energy into its political and economic relationships with the countries of the Asian Pacific region.

Until now, our political ties with individual countries in the region have largely reflected historical connections or other realities, such as Commonwealth ties, defence considerations, trading dimensions or development assistance. In the Pacific of the Eighties, we would hope to recast our political efforts in a more modern mold — one which takes account of the diversity and unique characteristics of our Pacific partners. We will also pay closer attention to building the broader and richer style of political understanding and



Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan.

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