
degradation, population growth, and narcotics trafficking. Our security interests are reflected in both a new institution - the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Regional Forum (ARF) - and in more diverse governmental and non-governmental vehicles. We are also expanding our political and security dialogue with Japan, South Korea and ASEAN countries, and promoting the integration within the region of Vietnam and China.

- **Middle East**

- **More peaceful, but tensions remain:** Despite progress in recent years towards a resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict, the Middle East remains one of the world's major security fault lines. It is also an area that carries serious risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Multilaterally, the region is critical to the UN's security agenda.

Our focus in the Middle East will be on encouraging, facilitating and developing confidence-building regimes that can advance the cause of peace and development in the region. Our participation in the multilateral phase of the Middle East Peace Process, particularly our lead role in the Working Group on Refugees, provides us with an opportunity to serve the cause of peace and underscore our longstanding commitment to regional stability and progress.

- **Africa**

- **Building a framework for peace:** While progress has been made towards political and economic reform in Africa, much of the continent continues to be marked by instability and conflict. For institutions such as the OAU, even where the political will exists, a lack of resources often poses problems. The road to stable, representative, democratic governments will be a long one for many countries, and the international community will have to give attention to the most effective mix of policy instruments to influence change.

As part of this effort, Canadian policy will focus on working with key African countries to develop international and regional frameworks that can anticipate and prevent conflict, and on addressing those factors such as environmental degradation, population growth and poverty that undermine common security on the continent. We are also promoting greater respect for human rights and for democracy through organizations such as the Francophonie and the Commonwealth.