

I Regional Activities

Africa and the Middle East

The tragic events in Lebanon, the continued efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict, the beginning of negotiations on the Rhodesian problem and South Africa's *apartheid* policies continued to engage world attention during 1976 and remained at the heart of Canada's concerns in this part of the world. The economic situation in most of the developing countries of the area, especially the least-developed, remained unstable, owing in part to economic-recovery problems in the developed countries and for a number of other reasons.

Canada continued to strengthen and diversify its relations with nations in Africa and the Middle East. In January 1976, the Secretary of State for External Affairs visited five Middle Eastern countries. The Prime Minister made a private visit to Israel and Jordan. The Minister of Supply and Services represented the Canadian Government at the twentieth anniversary of Tunisia's independence and also at the inauguration of the Canadian Friendship and Unity Road in Niger. Moreover, representatives from several African states and some Middle Eastern countries, including Israel, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, visited Canada either officially or privately.

English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Africa

On June 26, the Seychelles celebrated its independence and joined Canada and Mauritius as a member of both La Francophonie and the Commonwealth. The Comoro Islands was also recognized by Canada as an independent nation in 1976. All the former Portuguese colonies including Angola had been recognized by Canada by the end of the year. Diplomatic relations through non-resident representation were established with Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

With the final decolonization of Portugal's African territories and with the end of the Angolan civil war, efforts to achieve an independent Africa became focused on Rhodesia and Namibia and on the residual colonial problem of the French Territory of the Afars and Issas.

The problem of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) became the top priority for Africa in 1976, largely as a result of the conclusion of the Angolan civil war, the closing by Mozambique of its border with Rhodesia, and the efforts of Britain and the United States to find a peaceful solution to the Rhodesian question. During a visit to a number of African countries in April, the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, made it clear to the Smith regime that it could expect no support from the United States. Following a round of "shuttle diplomacy" by Dr. Kissinger, Ian Smith on September 24 accepted, with his own interpretations, joint Anglo-American proposals designed to lead to black majority rule within two years. A conference that opened in Geneva on October 28, chaired by Britain and attended by delegations representing the Rhodesian nationalist groups and the Smith regime, was called to establish an interim government leading to black majority rule. It set a target date of March 1, 1978, for the independence of Zimbabwe. In the light of views expressed by nationalist groups and African states, the British Government announced in December that it was ready to play a direct role in the transitional government if it was the general view that this would be helpful. Canada was asked to consider contributing to an internationally-financed fund to assist in underwriting any acceptable political settlement that might emerge for an independent Zimbabwe. The conference adjourned on December 14, with the hope (subsequently disappointed) that it would meet again in January 1977. Military activities mounted during 1976 as a result of increased guerilla activity and continued cross-border "hot-pursuit" operations by the Smith forces into neighbouring states, particularly Mozambique.

The question of Namibia remained unsolved. Canada urged the Government of South Africa to comply with the demands of the UN Security Council that it end its presence in the territory and facilitate the holding, as soon as possible, under UN supervision, of free elections for an independent united Namibia. Pretoria continued, however, to reject these United Nations demands.