Statements and Speeches

No. 74/8
(Corrected version)*

DIPLOMACY TODAY -- RECOGNITION, ASYLUM AND CONSULAR PROTECTION

A Lecture by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the
Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Osgoode Hall, Toronto, April 3, 1974.

In the last few years, as Canada's foreign relations have expanded
and grown in complexity, there has been an increasing awareness
among Canadians of these relations. As more Canadians every year
travel abroad, there is a greater appreciation of our overseas
activities and a greater interest in them. With this has come --
quite understandably -- a questioning of some of our ways of going
about our international business.

It might be useful, therefore, if I describe how the Government
sees the purpose of our missions abroad. I want particularly to
touch on three related areas, about which there has been a certain
amount of discussion in the press and in correspondence to me or
to my colleagues in the Government. These are:

1) Recognition of regimes;

2) consular protection of Canadians; and

3) asylum.

Since earliest times, the problem of the protection and advancement
of national interests in other countries has been considered an
essential national requirement.

From the early Greek writers, especially Thucydides, we have
descriptions of the situation which existed in the centuries before
Christ in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the methods devised for
establishing relations between different communities. The various
Greek city states existed in their separate valleys, and in earliest
times regarded strangers as being by definition hostile. It was
into this unpromising international -- or intercommunal --
atmosphere that the idea was born of sending emissaries or envoys
to discuss mutual problems and to resolve disputes.

These early envoys were, at first, often seized and, we are told,
cast down wells, before discussions could begin, simply because
they were strangers. But the idea that one state might wish to
speak with another state by means of an envoy was a very strong one.

---

* Replaces version distributed early in July 1974.