

As you may be aware, following an extensive foreign policy review concluded by my Department in 1970, Canada has embarked on an active programme of diversifying its external relations. The countries of the Pacific rank high on the list of countries with which we wish to intensify our relations. Thus, my current tour of Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and now Australia is intended to carry forward the momentum that has been created in the past few years - a momentum evident from the increasing number of Canadians that come to this region on private or official business, and by our expanding trade with this part of the world.

I think our interest in this is clear. Canada has for many years been directly involved in the peace and security of the Pacific region. Our role in the Korean War and our long years of participation in the Indochina peace and supervisory commissions have testified to our interest, as well as to our willingness to play a role appropriate to our circumstances.

This attitude has not changed. We continue to follow events closely and we are concerned by the tensions that persist after the conclusion of the war in Vietnam. Accordingly, I raised the topic of regional security in my discussion with government leaders in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Wellington. On the basis of these talks I have been confirmed in my belief that there are opportunities to foster trends that may lead to greater stability, despite the uncertainties that exist.

Canada shares with Australia the view that regional co-operation can be an important source of stability and of economic development. During my stay in Indonesia and Malaysia, I reconfirmed to my hosts that Canada strongly supports the principles and goals of the Association of South-East Asian Nations. I expressed the view that ASEAN's willingness to accept as members other countries in the region that subscribe to its principles is a welcome indication of its flexibility, even though I recognize that there are no immediate candidates for membership.

To express our support for ASEAN in concrete terms, I announced in Jakarta that Canada is contemplating development assistance for regional projects identified by the five member countries. I also indicated to my hosts in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur Canada's willingness to formalize the dialogue between ASEAN and Canada.

In addition to our support to ASEAN, Canada has also offered bilateral development assistance. Indeed, our development assistance programme in Indonesia is one of the largest we have in the world.