

widening range of questions of mutual interest such as the law of the sea, environmental improvement, narcotics control, anti-hijacking measures, emergency relief and disarmament.

4.6.2.9 Canada and Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East

Canada and Europe. Canada's relations with Western Europe have developed steadily under the impulse of major Canadian interests in the area. These countries have long been major trading partners for Canada and as a result of its growing prosperity and unity, Western Europe is likely to assume even greater importance for this country. Canada maintains close bilateral relations with Britain and France in particular, as well as with most other Western European countries, and has resident diplomatic missions in almost all of them. Canada is also, along with a number of Western European countries, an active member of NATO, OECD and wider international associations such as GATT. In view of the increasing economic and political importance that the Common Market is assuming for Canada, the Canadian government has been discussing with European Economic Community (EEC) member countries means of strengthening its economic relations through co-operation with the EEC in the field of industrial development.

Canada has a substantial interest in developing better relations with Eastern Europe. Increased trade, scientific and technological co-operation and cultural exchanges, and a strengthening détente in Europe have all been factors in this new situation. An important step toward détente was taken in November 1972 with the opening of talks in Helsinki preparatory to a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

A new era in Canadian - Soviet relations, based on a more candid and friendly atmosphere and on the principle of mutual benefit, was opened in 1971 with the signing of the Protocol on Consultations, the Industrial Exchanges Agreement and the General Exchanges Agreement, and expanded further in 1972-73 when they were implemented. These provide for regular and long-term co-operation between Canada and the USSR. At the same time, Canada has been pursuing improved relations with other East European countries in the hope of arranging similar mutually advantageous agreements. At present, Canada has resident diplomatic missions in Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, Belgrade and Budapest and maintains diplomatic relations with Romania and Bulgaria through non-resident Ambassadors.

Canada and the Middle East. Bilaterally, Canada enjoys cordial and increasingly important relations with most countries in the Middle East. For the past quarter-century, however, the area has been a focus of tension and conflict. During this period, Canada has participated in United Nations efforts to bring about an equitable and lasting settlement of the dispute between Arabs and Israelis and has made substantial contributions to measures designed to alleviate want among the victims of recurring hostilities.

Canada provided observers to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and was closely associated with the formation of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Canadian troops served with UNEF in Gaza and Sinai from its creation until its withdrawal in May 1967. Canadian officers are still serving with UNTSO, set up to supervise the Arab-Israeli cease-fire in 1967.

Since the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees was established, Canada has contributed cash, food and other supplies to it. In emergency situations various forms of assistance have also been provided through the International Red Cross.

Canada and Africa. Direct relations were first established with former British colonies in Africa as they became independent members of the Commonwealth. Increasing contacts and diplomatic relations with the newly independent French-speaking African states soon followed as a result of the increasing emphasis which the Canadian government placed on French culture in this country as well as the important role played by francophone African countries in their continental affairs. Canada now maintains diplomatic relations with almost all the independent African states and through resident Canadian missions in 14 countries. The development of bilateral diplomatic and commercial relations has been accompanied by a significant and growing program of Canadian aid to Africa. More than \$107 million in aid funds was directed to the African continent in 1971-72 and a further \$129 million has been committed for 1972-73.