

professional Inter-American organizations. In May 1975, Canada hosted annual meetings of the IAIAS, of the Commission of Geography of the PAIGH and of the Inter-American Centre for Tax Administrators.

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

Canada and Europe. Canada's relations with Western Europe have developed steadily. These countries have long been major political, cultural and economic partners of Canada and as a result of Western Europe's growing prosperity and vitality are likely to assume even greater importance. Canada maintains close bilateral relations with Western European countries, and has resident diplomatic missions in almost all of them. Along with a number of Western European nations, Canada is an active member of NATO, OECD and also wider international associations such as GATT, the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations and the European Regional Group of UNESCO.

Formal negotiations for a contractual link between Canada and the European Communities were begun in March 1976 and led on July 6, 1976 to the signature of a framework agreement for commercial and economic cooperation. This will provide a focus for cooperation between Canada and the European Communities which should lead to increased trade and investment opportunities for both sides.

Canada and the Eastern European states have in recent years increased trade, scientific and technological cooperation as well as cultural exchanges. Canada participated in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which opened in Helsinki in July 1973 and culminated in the signing of the Helsinki Final Act by the 35 participants on August 1, 1975, which opened the door to agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic.

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 Protocol on Consultations, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Industrial Application of Science and Technology, and the General Exchanges Agreement, which provide for regular and long-term cooperation between Canada and the USSR. Canada has also been pursuing improved and mutually beneficial relations with other Eastern European countries and now has resident diplomatic missions in Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, Belgrade, Budapest and Bucharest and maintains diplomatic relations with Bulgaria through a non-resident ambassador.

Canada and the Middle East. Canada has consistently attempted to follow a policy of balance and objectivity between the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute. Over the years, Canada has supported the efforts of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to alleviate the plight of Palestine refugees and has contributed to the maintenance of the cease-fire that followed the war of October 1973 by providing troops to serve with UN peacekeeping forces.

Many of the major oil-exporting countries of the Middle East have put their increased revenues to use by expanding their developmental projects. In addition, some have sought to employ a part of their surpluses in assisting other countries that lack such valuable resources. These countries are becoming more aware of Canada's potential as a reliable supplier not only of the traditional but also of the more sophisticated goods and services they require. In 1975 Canadian exports to the Middle East increased by some 70% for a total value of \$420 million, while the value of Canada's imports from this region, mainly of oil, rose by about 64%, to reach \$2,140 million.

Canada and Africa. Direct relations were 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. Canada now maintains diplomatic relations with almost all the independent African states and through resident Canadian missions in 15 countries. The development of bilateral diplomatic and commercial