



FOREIGN MINISTER ADDRESSES UKRAINE'S EXECUTIVES AND QUEBEC BUSINESS LEADERS IN MONTREAL

Canada's Foreign Minister André Ouellet emphasizes the government's commitment to improving partnership with Ukraine in every sphere: political, economic, social and trade.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to tell you personally just how important Ukraine is in the view of Canada's new government.

The Executive Development course that brings us together speaks of trust, friendship, and a willingness to learn from each other, attributes that were unimaginable only a few years ago.

Our host, the Quebec-Ukraine Business Council, represents the breadth and potential of our contacts. Our relationship is much more than Ottawa-Kyiv. It draws on the entrepreneurial spirit of each and every citizen. The thousands of people-to-people connections that link our two countries today helped Canadians understand, sooner than most, the significance of your declaration of independence August 24, 1991.

We can be proud of the fact that Canada was the first Western country to recognize Ukraine. However, we must also be ready to admit that more must be done to build the special relationship that we all want. We want a real partnership, with stronger ties in every sphere: political, economic, social and trade. This was what I told Foreign Minister Zlenko during our recent conversations in Rome.

Government can take the initiative in this partnership by setting out the framework. We are ready to negotiate and sign an umbrella treaty, affirming our common values and covering the whole range of our political relations with Ukraine.

We share a respect for diverse cultures. With intolerance and ethnic cleansing being the main threats to peace and stability, Ukraine's generous national minority policies help to make Europe a safer place and are a model for other states.

Our troops are serving together as UN peacekeepers in former Yugoslavia. We both have sustained casualties in this

terrible conflict. This is a new mission for Ukraine's army. Canada's armed forces are the world's most experienced peacekeepers and could provide valuable training as part of the program of military exchanges that we will soon be launching.

Ukraine is key to stability in Eastern Europe and a major regional player in its own right, alongside such neighbours as Poland, Turkey and Russia. Canada recognizes that Ukraine has real security interests that should be respected and valid concerns that must be addressed. The recent elections in Russia add to these worries. Security in Eastern and Central Europe requires co-operation, not renewed confrontation. We have joined Ukraine in expressing the hope that President Yeltsin will maintain Russia's commitment to reform and good relations with neighbours and the West.

We will watch developments closely and work in the CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the North Atlantic Co-operation Council to promote stability.

I must be very frank and tell you that Canada disagrees strongly with those Ukrainian parliamentarians who ratified the START 1 (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) treaty only conditionally. We welcome President Kravchuk's assurances that he will re-submit the START 1/NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) package for unconditional ratification right after Ukraine's March parliamentary elections.

As a non-nuclear weapons state, Canada is limited in the assistance that it can provide for actual dismantlement of missiles and warheads. We do have expertise, however, that could help Ukraine cope with the safety and environmental consequences of its Soviet nuclear inheritance.

Ukraine's security has become a global concern. I discussed the issues with Mr. Zlenko and Mr. Kozyrev in Rome earlier this month and came away convinced that Canada could help. As a G-7 [Group of Seven (leading industrialized nations)] and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member and one of Russia's privileged dialogue partners, Canada is well-placed to play the role of facilitator. This is something in which I am personally interested. I plan to visit Moscow and Kyiv in 1994 in order to help get things started and to find some concrete solutions.

The bedrock of any country's stability is ultimately its economy. It is critical that we in the West turn our attention to integrating an industrial state of 53 million into the world economy and multilateral system.

This year's (1994) G-7 Summit in Italy should have Ukraine as a focus. To prepare the way, Canada will encourage the opening of a high-level G-7 dialogue with Kyiv.

The Soviet Union left Ukraine a disastrous economic legacy: the Chernobyl tragedy, big wasteful factories producing things nobody wants and inefficient collective farms. These are formidable challenges. With the right mix of policies and assistance, however, they can be met.

With the difficult economic situation that Ukraine is facing this winter, some in government have been tempted to try and buy time by retreating into past certainties and centralized state control. Yet, the experience of all other economies in transition tells us that there is no way back.