

C harting a New Course in Canadian-Soviet Relations

In the current atmosphere of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union and co-operation between East and West, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's November 1989 visit to the U.S.S.R. could not have come at a better time.

On his six-day visit, the Canadian prime minister set the direction for a new era in East-West relations and demonstrated Canada's support for the massive reforms taking place under Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. It was the first official visit by a Canadian prime minister in 18 years and the first by any Western leader since the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the sweeping changes occurring throughout Eastern Europe.

After five hours of meetings, the two leaders signed a joint declaration committing their nations to respecting the right of East Europeans to "pursue paths of political and economic change, without outside interference and in an atmosphere of international confidence and security." The declaration also pledged support for international human rights, disarmament, a ban on chemical weapons and nuclear weapons testing, and the political settlement of regional conflicts.

Mulroney's visit — which included stops in Leningrad and the Ukrainian capital of Kiev — occurred in the wake of momentous changes in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. Even in the Soviet Union, the impetus

unleashed by Gorbachev's reforms continued to dramatically open the political system to increased democratic participation.

Successful Visit

More than a dozen agreements — on topics ranging from foreign investment protection and space research to environmental issues and joint programs in the Arctic — were signed by both countries. In Leningrad, Prime Minister Mulroney announced that Canada has asked the Soviet Union to work with a proposed Canadian Polar Commission to study problems in the Arctic. Canada also invited the U.S.S.R. to an international conference this spring in Yellowknife, in Canada's

Northwest Territories, to co-ordinate scientific and antipollution efforts in the Arctic.

On the diplomatic front, the two countries underlined their desire to expand consular ties with one another. Mulroney said that Canada, which currently operates an embassy in Moscow, will soon open a consulate in Kiev. In turn, the Soviets, who have an embassy in Ottawa and a consulate in Montreal, are expected to open a second consulate in Toronto.

In a lengthy interview published in the daily newspaper *Izvestia*, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze stated that Soviet-Canadian relations "have resembled a not-easy but consistent climb towards a mountain pass, beyond which new horizons of co-operation would open up. The talks in Moscow were just such a pass, a most important milestone." *Pravda*, the official organ of the Soviet Communist Party, said that the meetings signified "a large-scale act that will help shape the future and reflect the similarity of the Soviet-Canadian positions on many problems."



Bill McCarthy/PNO

Building a more durable international peace: Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (left), a member of the Soviet delegation, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark.