



## CANADA-RUSSIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

In terms of area, Canada and Russia are the world's largest countries. They are northern neighbours, sharing 85 per cent of the Arctic Ocean coastline and both bordering on the Pacific Ocean. Canada established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1942. During the wartime alliance, the Royal Canadian Navy escorted a large portion of Allied convoys to Murmansk. Relations were cool during the Cold War until the dramatic changes that led to the break-up of the USSR and the emergence of the Russian Federation as an independent state. Contacts between Canadians and Russians are now developing rapidly.

### Political Relations

Canada hosted the Vancouver Summit between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and U.S. President Bill Clinton on April 3-4, 1993. It was the third time President Yeltsin had visited Canada since becoming leader, evidence of the dynamism of the relationship between the two countries.

Canada and Russia have established a framework for managing their bilateral relations. During his May 1993 visit to Moscow, former Prime Minister Mulroney and President Yeltsin signed agreements on economic and environmental co-operation and a Memorandum of Understanding between the RCMP and the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As a member of the G-7, Canada is working with its Western partners to provide more effective support for Russia's political and economic reforms. Prime Minister Chrétien played an active rôle in discussions on Russia during the Naples Summit. He later confirmed that Russia will participate in the Summit that Canada will host in Halifax next June. The Prime Minister will meet with President Yeltsin during the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Ministerial Meeting in Budapest in early December.

Foreign Minister André Ouellet and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev meet regularly to consult on bilateral and international issues. The two foreign ministers most recently met in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on October 27 during the Conference on Partnership for Economic Transformation in Ukraine.

### International Relations

Canada supported Russia's assumption of the former Soviet Union's permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The two countries work closely together in the CSCE and as members of the NATO-sponsored North Atlantic Co-operation Council. Canada backs Russia's co-sponsorship of the Middle East peace process, and has appreciated Russia's active participation as a member of the Contact Group in the search for a settlement in former Yugoslavia.

Both Canada and Russia supported the creation of the International Arctic Science Council, and are now working together to form an international Arctic Council with a broader social, economic and environmental mandate. Co-operation also extends to the military sphere, where staff talks and visits to training facilities are now annual events. Canadian and Russian troops are serving in the UN peacekeeping force in the former Yugoslavia.

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