

distorts the rest of the world. Whatever threats the Arctic may face from nuclear weapons, naval warfare or whatever, these threaten the rest of the world as well. Canada's strong desire for peace in the Arctic does not imply a willingness to accept war elsewhere. While there may indeed be merit in discussing specific measures for the Arctic, we believe it would be illogical and even potentially destabilizing to consider these in any other than the global East/West context.

The Canadian government is committed to peace and security in the Arctic in the way it is committed to global peace and security. Our aversion to the militarization of the Arctic is evidenced by the very small -- less than 0.1% of total defence expenditures -- purely defensive military presence we maintain in the Arctic. In our view, the best way to ensure peace and security in the Arctic is to lend full support to the East/West negotiations on arms control. These are now offering us hope for significant reductions of nuclear and conventional weapons and reduced tension in many areas of the world, including the Arctic.

In modern times we have come to recognize peace as more than an absence of war. Canada believes that broadly based circumpolar cooperation in the Arctic can go a long way towards establishing a sense of mutual interest, dependence and trust in that region. Of course, we see circumpolar cooperation as an important element in the development of the Canadian north and its peoples, but it is more than that. Strategic sensitivities in the region developed at least partly because of our traditional perceptions of the Arctic as remote, forbidding and empty. The current rapid growth of cooperation between Circumpolar governments and peoples, of which this conference is an important part, can, we believe, go a long way towards breaking down those outmoded perceptions and make both the Arctic and the world a safer place.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to impress upon our Soviet guests just how enthusiastic Canadians are about increased Soviet-Canadian cooperation in the Arctic. The support for expanding this major component of our bilateral relationship goes far beyond this room. In fact, I know of no one who has any hesitation in applauding our recent successes and calling for more. I am aware that Canadian-Soviet cooperation did not just start yesterday. Our scientists have long worked together. Soviet support for Canada was crucial to our success in including special protections for ice-covered waters in the Law of The Sea Treaty. The Arctic-Rim countries have cooperated successfully to save the polar bear from possible extinction. But what we are now seeing is a new breadth and tone to our cooperation that is catching the enthusiasm of Canadians from sea to sea to sea. May this conference take this spirit and mould it into new concrete opportunities for our peoples to work together. To our Soviet guests, we thank you for joining