

-- that there are important links between political stability and social and economic stability at all levels: community, national, regional and global.

There is a debate about what comes first -- economic development or the development of democracy and democratic institutions -- and convincing arguments have been developed on both sides, depending on the region or country under discussion.

That debate misses the point, because it is not really an either/or situation. One can lose oneself in the elegance of philosophy, economics and political science and ignore the fact that at the foundation of all the esoteric arguments there is one common denominator: the welfare and prosperity of the individual.

In other words, social and economic development must go hand in hand with political development. Not only do they proceed apace, but they in fact reinforce one another.

Thailand is an outstanding example. Like much of the world, we were dismayed by the tragic events of last May. Yet by September -- only four months later -- you had elected a government strongly committed to democratic values and universally accepted norms of human rights. What was one of its first initiatives? To establish new economic and social programs to address the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

In a world becoming increasingly more knowledge-based, a country cannot waste the energy and potential of a single citizen. In fact, in an increasingly interdependent world, this proposition extends beyond national borders.

I have just come from Vancouver, British Columbia, where I attended the historic summit meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. At the root of much of the discussion was the question: How can the world prevent the possible political disintegration of one of its largest countries -- and the social and economic fallout that would, as a result, affect us all?

The problems of Russia are not restricted simply to that country. All countries would feel the repercussions of a return to the law of force, as opposed to the force of law. The Soviet winter lasted seventy-five years. We cannot stand aside and allow that country to return once again to the Ice Age!

Canada is committed to ensuring the continuing evolution of democracy in Russia and the concomitant social and economic benefits that it will provide. But the recent history of Russia places a spotlight on a much larger, global question: Where will the new wealth come from that is so necessary to sustain and encourage the millions, even billions of people who will have