

of the USSR expressed his interest in the details of this unique expedition and in the athletes' further plans. Those present expressed a common desire to continue their cooperation in the Arctic and to develop all-round contacts between the USSR and Canada.

It was noted that the Polar bridge built by the Soviet and Canadian skiers accords well with the concept of new political thinking. Mr. Ryzhkov recalled the Soviet Union's Murmansk initiatives, aimed at developing the Arctic for the good of people and developing the cooperation of the Northern countries in the task of protecting the environment in the interests of the states bordering the Arctic, Europe as a whole, and the entire international community. The expedition was, unquestionably, a step in this direction.

The Canadian Ambassador to the USSR, Mr. V. Turner, and Mr. P. Bird, President of the Conexus Company, an expedition sponsor, warmly expressed their thanks for the friendly reception accorded to the Canadian participants of the Arctic crossing in the Soviet Union, and for their decoration with orders of the Friendship of Peoples. Mr. Ryzhkov was given a letter from Mr. B. Mulroney, the Prime Minister of Canada, containing the following:

"The 1988 Transpolar Ski Expedition united Soviet and Canadian citizens in a difficult and daring enterprise. Those who took part in it displayed much courage, energy and resourcefulness. In conferring awards on the Canadian participants, the government of the Soviet Union has, in a special manner, noted their merits, something that they will remember all their lives.