

Just as Glasnost and Perestroika have unlocked doors to cooperation between East and West, they have, also, unblocked bilateral cooperation between Canada and the Soviet Union.

It has been eighteen years - much too long - since leaders of our governments have exchanged official visits - although Mr. Gorbachev paid an extended visit to Canada in 1983 and I had a meeting with him here, in Moscow, in 1985. And this, despite the fact that, Canada and the Soviet Union are northern neighbours and, in many ways, natural partners.

Like the U.S.S.R., Canada is a northern country, with a vast land-mass, subject to climatic extremes, blessed with stores of natural resources. If there is one country on earth that resembles the Soviet Union geographically, it is Canada.

Like you, we have to provide enormous amounts of energy to warm and transport our people. Like you, we have to transmit electric power over long distances. We have had to develop an agricultural system to cope with comparatively short growing seasons. We have had to build a huge infrastructure of transportation and communications to knit our country together.

Canada is also a highly industrialized, technologically advanced country, the eighth largest economy in the world, and one of the world leaders in international economic competitiveness. We have challenges that are comparable to your own and experience in dealing with them that is relevant to your own efforts to do so.

And, yet, with the exception of our booming trade in wheat and hockey tournaments, our relationship has not grown as it should. But we now have an opportunity to mark both substantial change and significant progress.

In the course of this visit, we will have signed government-to-government agreements across a wide range of issues on the international agenda.

There will be agreements on expanded cooperation in the Arctic, on the environment, investment, drugs, culture, space cooperation, nuclear cooperation and military exchanges, all under the chapeau of a political declaration that records for the first time our common perception of the world and establishes the framework for bilateral cooperation.