

I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss foreign policy in the House, although I confess to some puzzlement at both the timing and the content of the motion. The motion alleges a lack of "effective policy initiative in foreign policy" - and yet, in the last seven days, Canada has welcomed the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who came specifically to express his appreciation of Canada's contribution to that most central of the world's organizations; the Vice-President of the European Communities, here as part of a deliberate process of high-level meetings between the Community and Canada, initiated by this Government; and the first visit to Canada in nineteen years by the leader of the Soviet Union.

The world is changing dramatically - in the Soviet Union, in Europe, in South Africa, in Central America, in Cambodia, in Mexico, in Latin America at large - and Canada is pursuing an active, effective foreign policy on each of those fronts. We will welcome suggestions from other Parties as to other initiatives we should consider, but we do that against the background of a foreign policy which I am proud to defend, anywhere in Canada, or the world.

Let me deal briefly with the reference to parliamentary consultations. I think Governments traditionally make too little use of Members of Parliament in foreign policy, and we have tried to change that practice, and will consider any serious proposal Members might make as to how that role can be enlarged.

In that spirit, the Minister of Energy and I met this morning with colleagues who had visited AECL facilities in Romania. I have accepted enthusiastically to meet Members of the Standing Committee to discuss the recent trip to the Soviet Union and I can report to the House that, last week, the Standing Committee asked if there could be increased contact between Canadian and Soviet parliamentarians to discuss Arctic matters. I made that proposal to Mr. Shevardnadze on Tuesday, and he agreed immediately. I am prepared to act with similar dispatch on other practical proposals colleagues might make.

Five central issues were discussed in the meetings by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and myself with President Gorbachev, Mr. Shevardnadze, and the Soviet Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Maslukov.

First was the high priority both countries assign to enlarging our cooperation as neighbours and as nations sharing a widening range of common interests. That mutual priority is demonstrated by the fact that, in the last seven months, the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev have held two sets of long personal discussions, and Mr. Shevardnadze has visited Canada for consultations in February and again in May. I have accepted his invitation to return to Moscow this fall, to maintain that momentum.

Second, Canada affirmed our strong support of the profound academic and political reforms in the Soviet Union and discussed practical ways in which Canadians can help - in changing COCOM rules; in helping boost Soviet integration into the world economic system; by more joint ventures to add to the thirty-five already signed; by attractive arrangements to encourage immediate delivery of Canadian agricultural products; and by the discussion of new agreements regarding fisheries, tourism, health and potentially educational exchanges.