

Mr. Chairman, Ambassador and Mrs. Rodionov, Mr. Petrovsky, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, I am very pleased to have been invited to speak to you on the first evening of this truly visionary and inspiring conference. I doubt so many experts on so many facets of such a large part of the Arctic have ever been together in one room before. May I offer both thanks and congratulations to John Lamb and his colleagues at the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament for the initiative, imagination and industry that led to our being here tonight in such auspicious circumstances.

This is just the first day of your discussions. I originally thought, therefore, that I should try to give an appropriate "first day" tone to my remarks. You all know what that means. A "first day" tone is when the speaker begins by expressing his or her pleasure at being at the conference, but then quickly goes on to admonish the participants that they have much hard and serious work ahead of them. The speaker alludes to important developments that could result from a successful conference, but also to missed opportunities that may flow from failure. He or she expresses confidence in the participants, but the serious tone leaves no doubt that it is too early for congratulations. The remarks are positive enough to inspire the audience, but sober enough to ensure they all get to bed early.

Well, you do have hard and serious work ahead, and I do admonish you to take maximum advantage of this splendid opportunity to broaden and deepen the cooperation between the citizens of our two great countries. But I hope no one will think it inappropriately early for me to say that we already have much to celebrate. I am thinking, of course, of the foundation you have to build upon this week -- the extraordinary growth in Canadian-Soviet cooperation in the Arctic during this decade. In the past several years, Canadians and Soviets who live in, or are concerned with, the North have discovered they have moved enthusiastically to share and learn from one another. This conference is a testament to the fact that this process is just beginning. Many opportunities remain to be explored and seized. But I'm sure we can all take a moment to savour our impressive recent successes without losing any resolve to build upon them further.

Many of you are familiar with the elements of recent Canadian-Soviet cooperation in the Arctic. Perhaps the catalyst was the 1984 protocol on Arctic cooperation. In the five years since that agreement was concluded, hundreds of Canadian and Soviet scientists, public servants, educators, scholars, business people, native peoples and technical experts have met to discuss common interests and establish contacts. The protocol has proven so successful that our two countries are expected to conclude a new,