

The Soviet Union clearly expects favourable results for itself from this development, since we can be sure that its leaders are acting from a shrewd calculation of self-interest. We, too, intend to be hard-headed in dealing with the opportunities and risks involved. If we are cool-headed as well in assessing the realities that lie behind propaganda and ideological language, there can grow up a recognition on both sides of common interests on which further agreements could eventually be based.

We can see this happening in the growing willingness of Communist countries to expand trade, contacts and exchanges with the rest of the world. In the past, many Communist leaders feared that it would be dangerous for their own people to be allowed too much contact with the more economically-advanced countries of the non-Communist world. But now some Communist countries begin to see that they have to take that risk since those who isolate themselves from technological and scientific advances may fall further behind.

There are also fields in which we can learn from them. On both sides, there are advantages in knowing what is going on in the technical field abroad, regardless of social and political systems. As a result, growing numbers of Communist leaders have recognized that they can no longer maintain the traditional barriers and we Canadians who have always prided ourselves on our open society are, of course, prepared to open our doors on a basis of reciprocity.

Certainly, state authorities in Communist countries try to extract immediate political benefits from these growing contacts, sometimes in ways unacceptable to us. This is where a hard-headed assertion of our interest is our best defence. We can and will co-operate if the advantages are reciprocal. But we do not intend to allow political action by visitors here, for example, when anything comparable is obviously ruled out for Canadian visitors to their countries. Nevertheless, experience shows that, in practice, over and above the immediate benefits which trade and exchanges confer on both sides, such contacts have set in motion long-term trends whose importance could be very great; in the short term, we must have no illusions about quick results.

In considering the value to us in the long term of contacts with the Communist countries, we must take account of some developments within Communist society, particularly within the Soviet Union. It seems obvious that the Soviet Government has become sensitive not only about some questions of individual rights or about real economic incentives or more relaxed conditions for artistic expression but also about the position of various racial groups within the country.

It is not unnatural that this should happen, since theoretical Communism can scarcely solve all problems of this latter type. If these developments can be attributed not only to internal causes but also partly to outside influence, then we might well consider what could be the consequences for the racial groups I have just mentioned of prolonged and more varied contacts with non-Communist countries. I have no doubt of our ability, given the reciprocity in contacts on which we insist, to manifest our values in peaceful competition in such a way that the desired humanization of Communist societies could be advanced. We should, therefore, seek appropriate contacts because there are discernible long-term benefits in terms of the humanistic goals to which you and I and most Canadians subscribe.