

governments take a leading role in shaping economic development priorities and in deciding many major project contracts. In China, officials have made it clear that a strong and positive political relationship remains the essential ingredient from which all else flows.

But the importance of the political foundation and atmosphere for the success of individual relationships, and the pursuit of specific political, economic and cultural goals does not end here. There is another important dimension; one which, I am sorry to say, has been neglected.

I would define this aspect of political relations under the broad heading of cultural awareness. It encompasses the two-way flow of information of all kinds and the exchange of personal experience in academic, cultural and other fields. Such exchanges build better mutual understanding at the level of individuals, and by increasing awareness, general public support for more involved relationships between nations.

Increased information flows serve other purposes as well. In showing countries of the region that we have a distinct culture and lifestyle of our own, and in welcoming the on-going exchange of experience with these countries, we give tangible evidence of support for their desire to preserve and share with us the richness of their traditional values and societies in the face of increasing contacts with a fast moving world of compelling change. These forms of activity also can provide an avenue for easy communication in sometimes difficult circumstances. Who can forget China's use of "ping-pong diplomacy", or ignore the bridges Canada has built with the help of the National Film Board? If commerce subsequently flows over these bridges, so much the better.

I am sure you are all aware of the adage that no one does business with a stranger. It also seems rather obvious that we will not advance the broad range of our economic objectives unless decision makers in the region are aware of Canada as a sophisticated, multi-cultural, industrial country.

Let us not forget that a better knowledge and appreciation of Canada and Canadians, through the dissemination of information, exchanges of artists and exhibits, academic cross-fertilization and other programmes are a fundamental part -- the "mortar" some have called it -- of substantial long-term relationships, including those in the trade and investment fields.

Other countries in the world have long recognized the validity of this argument. The British and French governments