

ultimately defeated the Soviet threat. The countries in the region must be partners in this transition.

This past winter, the emphasis was on immediate humanitarian needs. The Washington Conference in January, which I attended, forged a new global coalition and a co-ordinated agenda for dealing with Eastern Europe. With the follow-up Conference in Lisbon next month, I believe the priority should be on medium-term strategies for locking in structural reform.

Canada and Eastern Europe in the Future

If Canada wants to be a player in this more interdependent world, we cannot isolate ourselves from what happens in Eastern Europe. Our future is inextricably bound up in what happens there.

One advantage that we have is the fact that Canadians are already working as advisers in Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and many other countries. They are advancing reform and networking for the future. They know the markets and, very often, the new people in power. Their numbers and economic clout can help offset the geographic advantage of our Western European competitors.

Hopefully their Canadian views of pluralism and human rights will provide a much needed buffering agent in the region.

The Soviet collapse has released pent-up ethnic hatred and unbridled nationalism throughout the region. Sensibly managed, patriotism can lend political legitimacy and create a basis for social cohesion. Exploited, nationalism can quickly become a destructive force, exploding into violent confrontation and civil war.

We are, of course, concerned when Russia or Ukraine play to extremist constituencies for political advantage.

The victory of freedom over tyranny can be assured only when Europe is truly secure. We cannot abandon the courageous people of Eastern Europe to whom we owe this historic opportunity. Democratic values and principles must be fostered and preserved.

Just last week, the Prime Minister helped mark the 75th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge and the 50th Anniversary of Dieppe. The graves of over 100,000 Canadian men and women mark our place in Europe forever. No one should doubt the strength of our commitment. Now that commitment must be channelled into meaningful change for the future.