

The issue of circumpolar cooperation of course raises the question of our relations with our huge Northern neighbour across the Pole.

We are the only nation in the world that has as neighbours both superpowers. There are changes within the Soviet Union that require sensitive and careful Canadian attention. Some of them affect the wider world interest of the Soviet Union - we are, for example, encouraged that the Soviet Government now shows more interest in strengthening the United Nations system, and in resolving some regional conflicts. We continue to press the Soviet Union to respect its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. In other specific areas, cooperation is increasing.

Our police and customs authorities collaborated in making a major seizure of illegal drugs. Canadian and Soviet space scientists have teamed with French and American colleagues to produce SARSAT - the space based satellite search and rescue system. We are developing a broader programme of Canadian-Soviet space cooperation. The USSR is one of our leading trading partners, and that trade is becoming more sophisticated, particularly in the oil and gas industry and in the provision of services. Overall the potential for bilateral cooperation is enormous, and some of it affects the North especially. That's why we were particularly struck by some of the intriguing proposals made by General Secretary Gorbachev a year ago in a speech in Murmansk, and reiterated in Krasnoyarsk.

Mr. Gorbachev called for better cooperation on the environment, on resource development on scientific cooperation and, for the first time, for multilateral cooperation. We are pleased with these positions because we have long worked towards such cooperation in the North.

In fact, his proposal for a meeting of Arctic scientists has been overtaken by events -- such a meeting has taken place earlier this year in Stockholm. Efforts to develop a framework for Arctic scientific cooperation which includes the Soviet Union are proceeding and we are having increasing success with that country in resource development.

Mr. Gorbachev called for cooperation among Arctic peoples. At that time the USSR had never allowed its Inuit to attend Inuit conferences, which led to some genuine skepticism about his call for cooperation. However, it is now my understanding that Soviet Inuit will attend the 1989 Inuit Circumpolar Conference. This is something Canada has long worked for, and we welcome this example of international glasnost.