

# STATEMENT DISCOURS



TOAST OFFERED BY THE  
HONOURABLE CHARLES LAPOINTE,  
MINISTER OF STATE  
(EXTERNAL RELATIONS),  
AT THE LUNCHEON IN HONOUR  
OF MR. MIKHAIL GORBACHEV  
AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE  
SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY  
DELEGATION,  
OTTAWA,  
MAY 18, 1983

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Mr. Gorbachev, Members of the Soviet Delegation and honoured guests, may I extend a warm welcome to you on this most auspicious occasion. I am very pleased you have been able to take time to visit Canada, to see how we live and to share your ideas with Canadians. As you may know, I attach great importance to meetings of this kind. For only if we talk can we ever hope to bridge the serious gap in understanding between East and West.

Your visit, Mr. Gorbachev, underlines the great potential of the relationship between Canada and the Soviet Union.

- Our agricultural links are already extremely important to both sides. We share your desire to intensify that cooperation and we want to maintain Canada's record as a reliable supplier of high quality agricultural products.
- Trade in other products is expanding, but remains far from its full promise. Mr. Regan, our Minister of State for Trade, will visit your country in the near future to explore this aspect personally.
- Programmes of exchanges in Arctic sciences and academic cooperation are being negotiated, and we are hopeful that results will be forthcoming soon.
- Resumed political consultations offer the opportunity to address the important political dimension to our bilateral relationship.

However, no bilateral relationship can flourish without taking into full account the broader international issues which confront us. The potential of our relationship, to which your visit is testimony, can only be truly realized in an improved international climate.

A recent publication from your Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, entitled "Canada on the Threshold of the Eighties", stated that Canada was "one of the first western countries to recognize that the old methods of resolving international problems were no longer viable"; that our leaders have stressed the necessity of building relations between nations with different social structures on the basis of "peaceful co-existence". I believe, Mr. Gorbachev, that the discussions today have confirmed the Soviet assessment of Canada's desire for an improvement in relations among states.

The responsibilities on the shoulders of you and your colleagues for peace, détente and constructive international harmony, are enormous. No one under-estimates the heavy responsibility which the Soviet Union has to bear in securing the world's future. But we are all in the search for peace together and, only together, can we create the atmosphere necessary to reduce tensions and to develop genuine cooperation.

Many would question me on why there is room for optimism. Our views on human rights vary substantially, as reflected at the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Your troops remain in Afghanistan. Events in Poland continue to concern us. Soviet military deployments threaten the security of the West and contribute a dangerous element to the arms race.

Is our perception wrong? We hear constantly of the Soviet desire for peace. We are intimately aware of the suffering and tragedy which the Soviet Union has experienced throughout its history. We acknowledge the depth of your feelings and your profound concern about security. But it is important to understand that our concern is no less strong and that the purchase of security for one state at the cost of security for others leads inevitably to greater insecurity for all.

The Geneva negotiations on Intermediate Nuclear Forces are a test of whether greater mutual security can be achieved through negotiation. Both President Reagan and General Secretary Andropov have indicated they are prepared to show flexibility in the search for an agreement. We, in Canada, look for further steps toward that goal in the near future. For the moment, the fact is that your intermediate-range missiles are already deployed in large numbers and pose a serious threat. You should be aware that Canada shares the determination of the western alliance to re-establish a balance should the negotiations fail.

The question of nuclear forces shows how crucial is the political challenge facing our two nations and our respective allies -- a challenge to begin again the rebuilding of confidence and détente and to remove the mistrust and suspicion which exist between us. Canada believes that ways must be sought to improve the dialogue between East and West -- to show to all our peoples that, with determination and goodwill, progress can be made toward greater cooperation and security.

And so I say to you, Mr. Gorbachev, as you tour our fortunate and varied country -- as you see Canadians enjoying the transformation of spring which heralds a new beginning in the life-cycle; as you see our agricultural potential and the care and love which so many Canadians give to their land -- take the message home, that Canadians, like Soviet citizens, care about life, care about peace, care about détente; convey the message that we are determined to see a new beginning in international cooperation, that no one has a monopoly on peace but that together we can make peace a reality.

Mr. Gorbachev, may I propose a toast to you and your Delegation. I extend a very sincere welcome to our country; I wish you a safe and fascinating journey. May this be a visit to strengthen the bonds of friendship and confidence between our two great nations.