



Ambassador Furkalo's Presentation Address:

" I have the honour and privilege to present to You my Letters of Credence as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Canada. President Leonid Kuchma has requested me to bestow his best regards and to express his sincere respect to You, Your Excellency, and to the Canadian people.

When receiving credentials from my Canadian colleague, Ambassador Christopher Westdal, three weeks ago, President Kuchma said: Ukraine praises immensely the role and commitment of Canada in strengthening Ukraine's independence and statehood in this crucial period of history.

That is why the people of Ukraine look forward to greeting Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in Kyiv and very much hope that this visit will further the special partnership that exists between our two countries. It serves as the model of a real international democratic cooperation required for the 21st century.

In less than five years after restoring statehood in my country, democratic institutions are now being and are beginning to function, the multi-party system has been reintroduced, national unity flourishes, and comprehensive reforms are being carried out. However, as every country in transition, Ukraine finds itself in a complicated economic situation.

My government and the newly emerging business community are doing their best to encourage progress in reform. Nevertheless, timely and unconditional international support could help Ukraine to occupy its proper rank in the world community much quicker. Thus the efforts by the Government of Canada to assist in the promotion of democracy and transition to a free market economy are being met with great satisfaction and gratitude.

Today our common responsibility lies in developing the practical conditions necessary to make it happen. I will work relentlessly for this noble cause, which, I believe is in the interests of both our countries' prosperity, democracy and security."

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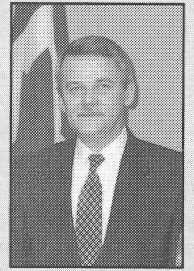
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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: AMBASSADOR FURKALO

Special to the Monitor



- *Mr. Ambassador, when President Kuchma designated you to serve as Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada, what were some of the priorities he identified to you?*

First of all, I would like to address the readers of the Ukrainian-Canadian Monitor, to express my sincere appreciation to our brothers and sisters in Canada for your concerns over our common homeland, and for your moral and financial support of Ukraine.

Both Ukraine and Canada have every reason to be pleased with the dynamism and intensity of our special partnership. There are many reasons for this, and I would like to emphasize that, despite our differences, Ukraine and Canada are "like-minded countries." We have established a mutually acceptable basis for our relationship, and now we must complement this infrastructure with substance. This is a two-way street. This is precisely why President Kuchma has called for an increase in practical cooperation in such areas as economy, trade, science and technology, to the same high levels of understanding and cooperation as we have already achieved in the political sphere.

- *What do you see as the major areas you would like to expand during your tenure as Ambassador?*

One of the main, if not the main direction for cooperation between our two countries, is economic. This is an area of great potential. It is especially important to draw Canadian investments to Ukraine; to encourage the creation of joint ventures; to inform Ukrainians about the possibilities for political and economic cooperation with Canada; to identify the potential of Canadian provinces and to pair them up with partners in Ukraine.

The priority sectors of Ukraine are in fuel and energy, agriculture, science and technology, ecology and medicine.

Today there are over 100 joint ventures in Ukraine with Canadian partners. Canada has the technology and equipment, especially in the first two sectors. Combining them with Ukraine's assets (a qualified and relatively inexpensive workforce, raw materials, local conditions) can and will produce good results. That is why we see such a large potential for cooperation between our two countries specifically in these areas. Although today the volume of trade remains small, it is growing in importance.

We also foresee increased cooperation with the provincial governments and private businesses. This is especially true since almost every province has its own specific potential, for example:

Alberta -- fuel and energy;

Saskatchewan -- agriculture;

Ontario -- finances-resources-science, and so on...

Ukraine already has good relations with government and business circles in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and our ties with Manitoba, Quebec, and Ontario are increasing. We could give many examples of this cooperation.

At this time we are paying a lot of attention to cooperation between the financial institutions in our two countries, such as banks, insurance companies, investment firms, etc. This will enable us to increase all aspects of our economic cooperation. Our Embassy has a data bank on investment and commercial possibilities in Ukraine, and it is available to anyone who's interested.

One of the most important responsibilities of governments is to ensure the development of science and technology, especially in the sectors of energy, aviation and space technology, communications, information technology, environment and health.

People here in the West cannot comprehend the complexity and all the ramifications of the Chornobyl disaster. The political decision of President Kuchma to close the nuclear facilities at