



foreign investors who want to do business in Ukraine. In particular, this is the new Ukrainian National Agency for Reconstruction and Development and the Ukrainian Public Credit and Investment Company.

Believe me, we are very interested in promoting business relations with all economically developed countries, especially with Canada. It was to your country that President Leonid Kuchma paid his first official visit and initiated the start of the special relationship.

- **MONITOR:** *What advice can you give Canadian businessmen still afraid to enter the Ukrainian market?*

**LAZARENKO:** Ukraine counts on our potential partners, especially Canadians, to work with us in improving the business activities in Ukraine. We see a fantastic unrealized potential here. Trade turnover between our countries in the 8 months of this year was US\$184 million - it's more than the previous year but much less than it could be.

I hope that the creation of the necessary legislative framework and the set of agreements in Ukraine will be an additional stimulant for more active bilateral relations. At present, we already have our bilateral Agreements on Economic Cooperation, Establishment and Mutual Protection of Investments and Convention on Avoiding Double Taxation.

As for fears of Canadian businessmen to enter the Ukrainian market, such countries as the USA, Germany and Great Britain already insure projects in economic cooperation with Ukraine. There exists no similar insurance for such activities between Canada and Ukraine, and such a step could significantly facilitate the growth of investments. It is sufficient even to look at the expanding activities of foreign creditors in Ukraine, including the international financial institutions like IMF and the World Bank. This is proof that Ukraine does not breach her responsibilities.

- **MONITOR:** *Canada played an important role in various international organizations, such as the G-7 and NATO. Have these been beneficial to Ukraine?*

**LAZARENKO:** It is impossible not to recognize the truly crucial role Canada played internationally during the five years of the existence of our independent state. As an intermediary, Canada was essential in positively influencing the West's actions towards Ukraine: withdrawal of strategic nuclear weapons, agreement on the Memorandum concerning Chernobyl NPP, efforts to reach an agreement on the Crimea through OSCE mechanisms, rescheduling of Ukraine's debt to the UNO, support on Ukraine's position in the IMF and

other international financial institutions, backing for Ukraine's position during the G-7 meeting on the nuclear safety issues in Moscow in April, 1996 and numerous other instances. All of these are ample evidence of Canada's enormous efforts in rendering comprehensive aid to Ukraine and intercession on behalf of Ukraine in the international arena.

Canada was and remains Ukraine's special partner.

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*Ukraine's Prime Minister*

Regarding possible Canadian assistance to Ukraine, we see long-term perspectives of our development as an independent country, first of all, within the context of consistent and systematic integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. I'm taking into consideration the correlation between the processes of economic, military and political integration, and also considering Ukraine's specific geopolitical situation in view of security. This means that the strategic course for integration aims not only at integration into economic and political structures of the Euro-Atlantic region but also into the security structures.

**W**ith respect to NATO, we believe that at present, NATO is the most efficient security organization in the Euro-Atlantic region. It proved its ability to adapt to new conditions and realities of time. In principle, NATO possesses the features allowing it to become in future the centre of the future Pan-European security system. This is why Ukraine is interested in developing the most active cooperation with this organization.

Today, Ukraine cooperates with NATO both in the framework of the Council for North-Atlantic Cooperation (since 1992) and Partnership for Peace Program (since 1994). It also participates outside the frameworks of CNAC/PFP -- as part of "extended and deepened" relations according to "16+1" formula. This is based on two important political documents "Ukraine and NATO Joint Declaration" (Sept. 14, 1995) and "Realization of Extended and Deepened Relations Between Ukraine and NATO" (March, 1996). As for the Alliance's expansion process, Ukraine is interested in expanding her relations with NATO to a formal "special partnership".

**D**evelopment of relations among new democracies in Europe should occupy an important place in the comprehensive common European integration process. This

becomes a real necessity and even a political imperative. Such a multi-directional and multi-dimensional process consistently, inevitably and logically, should lead us to integrity in the European integration.

Through it's responsibility as NATO's Contact Mission in Ukraine, Canada has confirmed it's commitment towards bringing about Ukraine's facilitation into NATO. This will also ease Ukraine's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. This support will always be remembered with deep gratitude.

- **MONITOR:** *Given your own special relationship and earlier visit to Canada in 1991, when do you plan to re-visit Canada?*

**LAZARENKO:** Relations between Ukraine and Canada can be characterized as special, unique and non-transferrable. There is a high degree of trust and mutual understanding at the political, public and social levels. These are determined, in particular, by the existence of a "pro-Ukraine" environment in Canada, supported by the large and influential Ukrainian diaspora in your country and its officially recognized contribution to the development of Canada.

My 1991 visit to Canada left very pleasant memories, and I intend to return to Canada, now as Ukraine's Prime Minister in the near future. Contacts between the leaders of our two countries, in particular regular exchanges, should become standard practice in our bilateral relations. Of course, we shall also be very pleased to welcome Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to Ukraine.

To a large extent, the future of Ukrainian-Canadian relations depends on the ongoing activities of the recently-established joint Intergovernmental Economic Commission. I hope to participate in the IEC and see first-hand the tangible results of the Commission's work in the nearest future.

*Ed. Note: Since the interview, Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko has agreed to visit Canada in June 1997, and attend the proposed 2nd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Economic Commission (IEC) and Canada-Ukraine Business Initiative (CUBI) in Western Canada. (See stories on pages 15, 16.)*

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