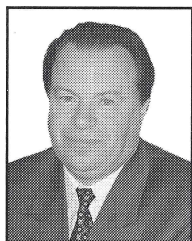




Special Interview

VICE PREMIER IVAN KURAS DISCUSSES PARTNERSHIP NEEDS



Monitor Editors Orest Dubas and Nina Romas met with Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister on Humanitarian Affairs during a recent visit in Kyiv, where he provided an assessment of his government's position and direction on some key issues related to Canada-Ukraine relations. We share some of his replies with our readers.

Ivan Fedorovych KURAS

Born in 1939, Mr. Kuras graduated from Odessa State University in 1962 and finished his graduate studies with the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv State University in 1967. A historian, he is an Associate Member with the Ukrainian National Academy of Science.

Mr. Kuras worked as a researcher with the Kirovograd oblast State Archives, assistant professor at the Kyiv State University, Party official, Deputy Director of the Institute of Political Studies. From 1991 to 1994 he was Director of the Institute of National Relations and Political Science of the Ukrainian National Academy of Science.

On August 8, 1994, by Presidential decree, Mr. Kuras was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine.

YOUTH

One of our great concerns at this time is the topic of our youth. President Kuchma has raised the question of training and teaching of our young specialists on a number of occasions. We must somehow make it possible for our young people to travel and to look around, to study languages and collect experience, and maybe share some of their own knowledge along the way. As Taras Shevchenko put it, "Learn what is foreign, but do not shun your own." Unfortunately, at this time our possibilities of sponsoring people at government expense are very limited. We prefer to look in the direction of exchange programs between our post-secondary educational institutions, especially technical ones, and of course our leading universities, such as Kyiv University and Kyiv Mohyla Academy. These are positive and useful experience and we are very much interested in them. We have people here on exchange from Canada, Germany, and the United States. Recently, I met a group of Ukrainian students from a technical college in Germany, where they

have mastered the language and are exposed to professional and human contacts. Everyone is delighted with these programs and they are very important indeed.

On the question of humanitarian aid from Canada to Ukraine, first of all I would like to address the type of aid that we would not want to see. We really appreciate any manifestation of good will, especially assistance for those who are truly in need. But if we look at it from the government point of view - I think that some things are no longer necessary. Whatever hardships we may face today, we are nevertheless capable of feeding and clothing our population.

HEALTH CARE

Where we need serious humanitarian assistance is in the area of health care, and there is no question here. We need help with medicine, technology, and joint projects. One problem, for example, with which we are having difficulty is the fact that we have a great number of people with diabetes. Ukraine does not have the facilities to manufacture insulin. This is a very urgent situation. In the former Soviet Union, Ukraine did not produce its own medicine; it did not have its own pharmaceutical industry. In fact, the entire former USSR imported much of its medicine from Italy, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. Now we are working on establishing a pharmaceutical manufacturing industry of our own, but in the meanwhile we are experiencing a great shortage of medicine. There is a possibility that perhaps we will start producing insulin by the end of this year. However, so long as the sick are in need of treatment and we don't have it, there is a necessity for wide-ranging organized assistance in health care and in medicine in general. This is an urgent matter for Ukraine.

Another vital area is technical assistance with the modernization of our technologies, R&D and our industries. This need is rooted in the obvious lack of

expertise and funds. Third is the training of our specialists. We need training programs in humanitarian and technical spheres.

From the very top ranks of our government structure we are aware of the great lack of experts in modern economics, law and international relations. We have no trained experts in these fields. The President himself has issued a decree for the creation of an Institute of International Relations and a Diplomatic Academy. It has not happened yet, but the decision has been made, and we are paving the way for an institution to train top-level diplomats -- educating top-level experts in diplomacy, who will be prepared to work under modern requirements.

TEXTBOOKS

There is also the question of textbooks. When I took office last year, we were entering the 1994/1995 academic year with only 30% of the required textbooks for our secondary and high schools. This year we have taken action to improve the situation, and despite our financial and technical difficulties we managed to bring this figure up to 80%, and will do everything in our power to increase it further. But we also have difficulties with the content of the textbooks. A Canadian, Orest Subtelny's "History of Ukraine" is now used in our schools. Our own specialists are now in the process of re-writing our textbooks. The textbooks which we inherited from the Soviet era are no longer acceptable, as they are filled with that ideology. At the moment, we still have a need for assistance with this question, but more in the form of cooperation rather than just asking for help. We were getting textbooks from some American institutions. Our Polytechnic University has an agreement with "Pepsi-Cola", oddly enough, and