



*** *Exclusive to the Monitor* ***



CANADA

CANADA'S FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES NEW RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs André Ouellet has begun a new chapter in Canada-Ukraine relations through innovative policies and programs to assist the newly-independent country in its quest for national security and economic stability. The scope of the government's initiatives runs the gamut of technical assistance to political and economic support. At the recent CSCE meetings in Rome, Mr. Ouellet offered Ukraine's Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko a key role for Canada to act as mediator for Ukraine with the US, the West and Russia. In Ottawa, Mr. Ouellet discusses Canada's new directions with Monitor Editors Orest Dubas, Andrij Hluchowucky and Nina Romas.

- *Mr. Minister, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has received excellent reviews of your recent meetings in Rome and Brussels. You have shown some strong representation on pretty tough issues, like Europe and Ukraine. In view of Mr. Clinton's visit to Kyiv and Ukraine's signing of the agreement on nuclear weapons, I believe that we have reached a new era, a new age, and can now proceed with Ukraine playing a much larger role in the whole community of nations. Where do you see Canada-Ukraine relations at present, and how do you see them developing in the future?*

I think that at the present they are very good. And no doubt a number of Canadians of Ukrainian origin have expressed a key interest to intensify the links with Ukraine. Certainly the international recognition of the independence of Ukraine has been assisted by the influence of the population here in Canada. But Canada was one of the first countries to speak out in favour of the recognition of the independence of Ukraine. And secondly, I want to say that I believe that the fact that our relations are good, allow us to build on them as a new government. We see the new era in Europe as an opportunity for Canada to devote more time, attention, energy, resources to build our relationship with countries who were members of the Warsaw Pact and were perceived as our enemies rather than our friends. So this is

a priority for us: to nourish this new relationship, and Ukraine is singled out as a priority country for us.

- *Mr. Minister, when President Leonid Kravchuk signed the historic Agreement with the United States and Russia committing Ukraine to eliminate its nuclear weapons on January 14, 1994, he gave it his pledge to make Ukraine nuclear-free. All Western leaders share a responsibility to guarantee its security against any future interference or invasion. In Rome recently, at the CSCE meetings, you stated that you understood Ukraine's reluctance to surrender all nuclear missiles without guarantees. How do you believe that this tripartite agreement addresses Ukraine's security and why should it be ratified by Ukraine's parliament?*

President Kravchuk has enhanced Ukraine's security by signing the Moscow statement. The Rada should support its implementation because it assures Ukraine of compensation for dismantling its nuclear weapons. It also opens the door to more assistance and badly-needed debt relief. The agreement guarantees a supply of processed uranium for Ukraine's nuclear plants. This should help ensure that an energy crisis like this winter's won't occur again. It gives strong written assurances that Ukraine's security,

sovereignty and independence will be respected and that Ukraine will not be subject to threat -- including economic pressure-- from any other state. Keeping nuclear weapons will not enhance Ukraine's security. In fact, Ukraine's ambiguous stance complicated its integration into the world community and added to instability in the region. Becoming a non-nuclear weapons state clears the way for peace and prosperity.

- *As a key player in the Western alliance, what actions will Canada be taking in support of Ukraine's security?*

As I said in Montreal, respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity is important to us. Canada will not tolerate inflammatory statements that threaten Ukraine. Indeed, we have protested such statements in the past. We believe that Ukraine's security, like Canada's, is best enhanced through participation in multilateral organizations: the CSCE, NACC (North Atlantic Cooperation Council) and the UN, supported by strong bilateral links with its partners. We are encouraging Ukraine to take full advantage of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.