

I would like to join others in welcoming our three new participating states -- Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania -- Canada has long been a supporter of the Baltic States and looks forward to working with them in their newfound freedom.

As we open this historic meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the principles and processes of our organization are again being challenged. In post-1989 Europe there is much to celebrate but still much to fear.

Canada is not part of this continent. But for us, the expression, "from Vladivostok to Vancouver" is more than rhetorical flourish. Security in Europe deeply concerns us. Canada has fought two World Wars on this continent. Our families come from here. What happens in Europe comes to us instantly on our television screens. Our security is indivisible from yours.

Canada itself is a fortunate land, but also not one without difficulties. At the current time, we are in deep debate over our own internal political structures and we are emerging from a troubling recession which is now, more clearly every day, turning around and leading us once again into prosperity. I'm making this point because Canadians have their own worries which are made more anxious in a world where directly or indirectly their own insecurity becomes an issue.

Canadians are deeply committed to values that are now taking hold -- the ascendancy of human rights, the rule of law, political pluralism. In Canada we are engaged in trying to bring decision-makers closer to people. We are making government more understanding and responsive to real needs and concerns. We are working together to recognize the distinct elements in our society and to build a spirit of harmony and co-operation that celebrates those differences. This is Canada's agenda -- we believe it is one that is shared by the countries represented around this table.

We have watched the courageous assertion of the individual's sense of human rights, of a free press, of civil liberties that began in Poland and culminated recently in the Russian Parliament. We laud these achievements. But they need to be enshrined as universal values and as binding features of international security.

In the last few weeks alone, the contours of European security have shifted once again, renewing the challenge to adapt our own institutions -- or even to devise a new European security structure. New threats to security are outpacing our genius to devise new ways of coping with them. These menaces will not wait for the architects of the new security order.

We know that ethnic and nationalist ambitions, temporarily repressed by communist rule can -- once let loose again -- threaten the new democratic systems. That is beginning to happen already. The latent ethnic and national antagonisms are carrying