

the word could be incalculable. Canada, for reasons too obvious to mention, should be especially sensitive to the difficulties of designing and managing a multi-national state. Our own business in these matters is to encourage programs of economic and other cooperation between Canada's provinces and the Soviet republics. In that connection, we urge the provinces to sign, and to implement vigorously, Memoranda of Understanding with their Soviet counterparts[, as provided for in the Agreements signed during the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union in November 1989.

Human Rights and Democratic Development. There has been very significant progress in the area of human rights since glasnost and perestroika and there are good prospects for further improvement. To take only one example, the Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Supreme Soviet pointed out to us that emigration from the Soviet Union is now much easier than it once was. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights recently held its first-ever official meeting in the Soviet Union and issued a statement that recognized that the earlier pattern of "systematic, gross and flagrant" violations of human rights was receding, although slowly. The statement went on, however, to criticize the Soviet Government for continuing abuses against millions of Soviet citizens, including the holding of political prisoners, maltreatment of army recruits and continuing restrictions on would-be emigrants and refugees from internal conflict. For our part, the Committee is particularly concerned that tensions arising from nationalist aspirations in the Soviet republics could reverse the recent improvements in the human rights picture. We note, for example, that there have been crackdowns on nationalist groups, particularly in the Ukraine.

Canada should be openly critical of human rights violations, but we would stress there is now a great opportunity to go beyond this confrontational approach to cooperative and constructive support for the development of strong democratic institutions in the USSR. In meeting with elected representatives at the union, republic and city levels, we saw clear evidence of the emergence of vibrant politics in the Soviet Union and opportunities for practical Soviet-Canadian cooperation. To this point, Canada has not gone as far as some other countries in developing programs for cooperation in this area. The newly established International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development may be a logical instrument for such cooperation, though it was established primarily to assist developing countries and its funding comes exclusively from Official Development Assistance which can only be expended — properly, in our view — in the third world. **The Committee recommends that, as a matter of urgency, the Government be prepared to establish programs of cooperation in democratic development when requested by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and that, for this purpose, it examine alternative channels of cooperation, including the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development. If the Government decides to support the Centre's activities in this area, it should do so by providing additional non-ODA funds. The Committee is concerned to safeguard the Centre's primary mission of supporting human rights and democratic development in developing countries.**