

Negotiations will get underway early next year on facilitating human contacts between Canada and the Soviet Union. These will include measures for the management and review of family reunification questions. Reaching agreement will not be easy. And even if agreement can be achieved, the litmus test will be whether there is any real progress by the Soviet Union on the issues involved. The Soviet Government issued a decree a few days ago about its emigration policies. We will be watching very closely to see whether this leads to progress in resolving cases of interest to Canada. One disappointing feature is the absence of any specific reference to the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

In our view, the policy that will have the greatest chance of success is to maintain firm and committed pressure on the Soviet Union to improve its human rights performance. You can help us by continuing your pressure on Soviet authorities to allow more Jews to leave the Soviet Union, by calling on the USSR to ease repression on those who stay behind, and by publicizing abuses of human rights in the USSR. In so doing, you will be helping to ensure that this situation is not forgotten by Canadians or the rest of the world, nor allowed to be ignored by the Soviet Union.

For our part, we will encourage any positive developments, such as the release of prominent refuseniks, while not allowing ourselves to be blinded to the harsh realities for those who remain in the USSR. We will press for an increase in the number of people allowed to emigrate and be reunited with their families outside the Soviet Union. We will work hard with other nations at the CSCE to seek progress in all aspects of the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document, including increased human contacts. In our continuing discussions with Soviet authorities, we will leave no doubt that there must be progress on human rights if our relations are to develop in a positive manner.

That is the responsibility of both individuals and government. It is one that we have freely and willingly undertaken, as the Soviet Union has freely and willingly undertaken to respect human rights by signing various international declarations, covenants and agreements and in its Constitution. The difference between us is that we are committed to comply with our undertaking. We must do all that we can to make the Soviet Union comply with theirs.