

In approaching this question, Canada proceeded on the basis that relations between states cannot remain unaffected where respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is seen to be deficient. Our discussions have shown that we have a long, long way to go and this will take time before we can feel confident that the inherent dignity of the human person and his prerogative to know and act upon his rights are being respected in all places and in all circumstances. There is evidence that individuals who have tried to exercise rights that are endorsed in the Final Act are still being harassed, exiled, arrested, tried and imprisoned. This has led the Parliament of Canada to adopt resolutions as a unanimous expression of its deep concern in respect of what we see as violations of fundamental human rights. We earnestly hope that the attention that we have focused on these matters will encourage governments to reflect on the negative impact of their practices.

We had hoped that Belgrade would be the occasion for all signatory governments not only to reaffirm their pledges to respect human rights but also to act on them. We have never claimed that human rights are all there is to *détente*. What we have claimed, and what we do claim, is that, to the extent that *détente* rests on confidence, we cannot muster that confidence among our citizens unless it is seen to have a human dimension. Respect for human rights is part of the structure and balance of the Final Act. If we want the Final Act to be more than the sum of its parts, we cannot with impunity act as if the societies to which it relates were islands cut off from one another. Our concerns on these humanitarian issues are not motivated by a desire to wage ideological warfare or to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

In the specific area of human contacts, we tried to get acceptance for the idea that the provisions of the Final Act should be applied in such a way that family contacts — whether involving visits or reunification — would be facilitated as a normal routine so that such cases no longer would have to be the subject of individual negotiation between governments. We also tried to get agreement that governments would facilitate normal communication of ideas and information between individuals, particularly through the freer flow of printed material. For a country like Canada, with its close links with Europe, this is a matter of direct and practical relevance. As Canada's Minister of State for Multiculturalism, I am particularly conscious of the degree to which events in Europe have found their way into the consciences of our nation, and especially of that large portion of our population who trace their origins to Europe. In a freedom-loving society such as ours, questions of culture, religion and tradition are of fundamental importance and are to be respected along with civil and political rights.

We regret that our efforts to achieve a document of substance on these issues have been unavailing. We had hoped that, in this important area, it might be possible to distil some understanding about how the provisions of the Final Act could be carried out more effectively and in a more routine way. Some may be made uncomfortable by a discussion of these humanitarian concerns but distaste for them will not make them go away. Certainly, Canadian interest in them will not cease just because this meeting has ended. Our commitment to these goals will be vigorously maintained.

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