



communiqué

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TRIAL OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, declared today that the Government of Canada is deeply concerned and disappointed that the Soviet Union has chosen to ignore its offer to accept Anatoly Shcharansky in Canada and to proceed with his trial. The fact that Mr. Shcharansky's attempt to emigrate to Israel and to monitor Soviet implementation of the Helsinki Final Act have led to charges of treason cannot but have serious negative consequences for the détente process. This trial directly contravenes the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act by which all signatories agreed to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It also calls into question the commitment of the Soviet Union to the Final Act and to the process of détente which is linked to it.

The presence in Canada of a number of Mr. Shcharansky's relatives and wide Canadian concern for him make it inevitable that Canada-USSR relations will also suffer as a result of the trial.

At a time when we should be working towards increasing confidence and eliminating sources of tension, the repeated trials of Soviet citizens for activities in defence of their basic human rights are harmful and counter-productive in that they will serve only to foster distrust.

The Canadian Government is equally concerned to learn that Alexander Ginzburg will be brought to trial on Monday, July 10.