

Two things should be clearly understood. First, by accepting the Moscow meeting, Canada has not signified that problems of human rights and human contacts in the Soviet Union no longer exist. On the contrary, much remains to be done. Indeed, the USSR has undertaken to continue its work over the next two years of making Soviet society more open, democratic, and governed by the rule of law. Reforms are to be securely institutionalised. We welcome these promised undertakings, and will look forward to their fulfillment.

The second point I want to emphasize is that, having discussed this matter with the Soviet Union, having examined all the facts and assessed its performance against criteria we know to be important to the Canadian people, we consented to the Moscow meeting not just as a compromise or as a political gesture. Our consent should be seen as an expression of hope, based on recent improvements, and of confidence that the future will bring even more.

We trust that when our delegations, and the hundreds of groups, individuals, and journalists that traditionally assemble for CSCE meetings, gather in Moscow in 1991, they will find an open and tolerant environment for frank exchange.

There are many, many more provisions on human rights and humanitarian cooperation in the Vienna Concluding Document which take account of the differing interests of our peoples. Canada considers all of them important. Together, they are a great achievement. In most cases they are clear and unequivocal. We recognize that there is still room for improvement, but what is in this Document will, if fully implemented by all participating States, lead to great changes in the lives of millions of people, and will have a real impact on European confidence and security. Let me illustrate by one example from our own experience.

On December 7, many communities in Armenia were struck by a devastating earthquake that killed outright some 25,000 people and injured thousands more. At one time, the Government of the Soviet Union and some other participating countries faced with a similar disaster might have said there was no problem, no help was needed. But this time it did not. From all over the world, offers of help came forward spontaneously, inspired by a natural human feeling of sympathy. The Canadian Government responded to the need for assistance.

But what was most remarkable to me was the response of the Canadian people. Those of Armenian descent rallied in fervent support of their ancestral homeland. Many ordinary Canadians, moved by nothing more than their fellow feeling with those in distress, donated money, clothes and supplies. In Ottawa, during the busy Christmas period, I saw volunteers