

The historic significance of this first meeting of the Council of Ministers -- and in this historic place, at this historic time, is not lost on us.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CSCE

The opportunity here today is to develop this institution to provide more effectively for the security of Europe.

It is a challenge with direct relevance to us as Canadians because it is our security as well that is at stake.

Throughout our history it has been clear that Canadian and European security has been indivisible -- conflict in Europe involves Canada directly because so many of our interests lie in Europe.

A COMMUNITY OF VALUES

In today's environment we must not neglect the message of the Helsinki Act itself, and focus too narrowly on security as it is normally understood.

We are in reality speaking about a community of values -- a community of democratic values.

The events of the last years make the sharing of these values a reality, not a rhetorical objective.

Democracy in Europe is a fact -- one acquired through great struggle and at considerable cost. I and other Canadians salute those here today who were personally involved in those struggles in their homelands. This is an historic meeting for all of us, but particularly for you.

DEMOCRACY: THE MOST EFFECTIVE BINDER OF SECURITY

The systemic benefit of the spread of democracy has been the strengthening of European security. Democracies can work together in trust at many more levels than totalitarian societies.

The impulse in relationships among democracies is towards a multiplicity of contacts and interrelationships as our Polish friend has pointed out in his relevant remarks. These contribute to confidence-building.

A sense of interdependence, backed by strong public support, is the best security builder there is.

A particular challenge we face is helping you, our friends in Central and Eastern Europe, consolidate your new democracies.