

Mr. Chairman,

I can think of no better way to begin than by paying tribute to our host country. Not only for the magnificent hospitality extended to us by the Spanish Government but also for the invaluable contribution of Spanish diplomacy to the CSCE process, from the earliest stages, through the Belgrade follow-up meeting, and throughout the lengthy meeting to which Spain's capital has been host. The present meeting was made possible by the brilliant and courageous initiative taken by President Felipe Gonzalez. We are here to set the final political seal on three years of arduous labour by our delegations. In that final success also, Spain has played a leading role.

The presence in Madrid this week of ministers of the states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is a testament to the importance this conference holds for our respective governments and peoples, and to our deep concern that the CSCE process should not founder. This forum, and those ministers present, must unfortunately now bear witness to a tragedy which evokes indignation.

I am referring of course to the destruction of a Korean Airlines Boeing 747 on August 31. The conscious in-flight destruction of this civilian, unarmed passenger aircraft by sophisticated fighter aircraft of the Soviet Union, no matter where or how it occurred, has outraged public opinion throughout the world.

This action has uselessly eradicated the lives - 269 of them - citizens of many of the states represented here today. In the case of my own country, at least ten Canadians have perished. There can be no justification, whatever might have been the circumstances, for this callous demonstration of the eagerness of a state to exercise its territorial jurisdiction against the unintentional presence in its air space of a civilian airliner and to destroy in this instance the lives of innocent citizens.

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